A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF FIRST AND SECOND THESSALONIANS:
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO AUTHENTIC PAULINE LETTERS

by

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ABSTRACT

"A Discourse Analysis of First and Second Thessalonians: The Relationship between the Two Authentic Pauline Letters"

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This dissertation employs discourse analysis, grounded in the linguistic concept of register within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), to explore the relationship between First and Second Thessalonians, positing that both texts are authentic Pauline letters. Challenging the prevalent view of pseudonymous authorship of 2 Thessalonians, which is based on alleged situational inconsistencies with 1 Thessalonians, this study argues for a consistent ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning across both letters, thereby affirming their shared context of situation. Through a meticulous register analysis, this research provides a fresh perspective on the debate over Pauline authorship by demonstrating that the arguments traditionally used to either contest or support the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians—centered around semantic and structural features—do not hold when the language of the texts is closely examined.

Moreover, the study delineates how both letters actualize specific semantic and structural potentials related to their registers, thereby generating meanings through various linguistic elements and structures. It scrutinizes claims of internal inconsistencies, focusing on aspects such as eschatological views, attitudinal stances towards recipients, and modes of interaction, to assess whether these purported differences undermine the attribution of both texts to Paul. Additionally, it explores how the Thessalonian

correspondence constructs its context of situation linguistically, without relying on historical presumptions, thereby offering insights into the communicative purpose and the thematic concerns of the letters.

Ultimately, this dissertation contributes to the discourse on New Testament authorship by suggesting that a nuanced understanding of the linguistic features of First and Second Thessalonians can illuminate their relationship and authenticity. This approach invites a reevaluation of the criteria used in the scholarly debate on Pauline authorship and encourages a deeper appreciation of the complex interplay between language, context, and meaning in these foundational Christian texts.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

First and Second Thessalonians, which are traditionally recognized to have been written

by the apostle Paul to the Thessalonian church community in the province of Macedonia

in the first-century Greco-Roman era and are part of the canonical writings of the New

Testament, continue still to offer valuable resources to the contemporary scholarly field

of New Testament studies.[1] The values that First and Second Thessalonians provide to

modern scholars can be examined in several general ways. First, as a historical aspect, the

two Thessalonian letters give us a glimpse of the circumstances to which they were

addressed, within what cultural, political, and religious milieu the letters' participants

communicated, and how they formed social relationships within and outside their church

community.[2] Second, the two letters, if they were written around 50–51 AD in Corinth

during Paul's second missionary journey and were both written within a short space of

time, provide illustrations of the path and ways of Paul and his mission team's

evangelical and pastoral efforts towards Christian believers in the Gentile world.[3] Third,

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[1] When it comes to authorship, there is controversy over whether both Thessalonian letters were written by Paul, and this will become clearer as the discussions unfold below. The traditional position on authorship advocates that Paul wrote the two letters and sent them to the Thessalonian church. On the other hand, the critical position on authorship holds that 1 Thessalonians is an authentic letter written by Paul, but 2 Thessalonians is an inauthentic Pauline letter written by a pseudonymous author using Paul's name after his time. However, for the sake of discussing the value of studying the Thessalonian correspondence in the scholarly field today, this statement should be understood in the context of its general recognition of the letters as being attributed to Paul in the New Testament canon.

[2] For this matter, refer to Collins, *Birth of the New Testament*, 72–113; Hendrix, "Benefactor/Patron Networks"; Unger, "Historical Research"; Edson, "Cults of Thessalonica"; Edson, "Macedonia"; Breytenbach and Behrmann, eds., *Frühchristliches Thessaloniki*.

[3] See Hadorn, "Abfassung"; Martínez, "El apóstol Pablo"; Hock, *Social Context*.

in terms of a theological aspect, the Thessalonian correspondence contains a number of

unique theological and Christian ethical teachings that distinguish them from other New

Testament writings attributed to Paul. In particular, it is undeniable that scholars pay

special attention to the two Thessalonian letters whenever discussing apocalyptic

outlooks and eschatological ideas that can be inferred from the New Testament writings.[4]

Fourth, as literary and linguistic aspects, First and Second Thessalonians present

themselves as valuable resources as the subject of study of ancient letters used as a means

of communication and written in first-century Hellenistic Greek, meaning that these two

letters exist as one of the significant examples of the mode of communication and

language use chosen by the people of that period.[5] Finally, the Thessalonian

correspondence still provides a rich area for scholarly discussion, as no definitive

conclusions have been reached regarding the general aspects mentioned above. That is to

say, the wide variety of exegetical interpretations of the Thessalonian texts, along with

diverse scholarly opinions on historical, cultural, social, chronological, theological,

ethical, literary, and linguistic matters demonstrate that First and Second Thessalonians

remain valuable subjects of study that still require further investigation today.[6]

Above all, however, the most notable issue that the study of First and Second

Thessalonians provides to the contemporary scholarly field is how to establish the

ostensibly troublesome relationship between the two letters and the related authorship

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[4] See Rhijn, "Jongste Literatuur," 282; Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*, 50–58; Foster, "Eschatology, 57–58"; Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" 151–52.

[5] See Aune, *New Testament in its Literary Environment*, 158–73; Porter, ed., *Language of the New Testament*. This edited volume contains the primary works of leading scholars who are considered to have played a significant role in the study of the Greek of the New Testament with respect to the Hellenistic variety of the Greek language of the first century AD.

[6] Thiselton (*1 & 2 Thessalonians*) extensively covers the history of interpretation of the passages of the Thessalonian correspondence and various scholarly opinions on the introductory matters from the patristic period to the nineteenth century. See also, Weima and Porter, *Annotated Bibliography*.

question. In truth, scholarly discussions and a range of interpretive viewpoints on exegetical, historical, theological, literary, and linguistic issues are not unique subjects only to Thessalonian studies; they are also commonly dealt with in the study of other biblical texts. However, what makes First and Second Thessalonians unique compared to other biblical writings generally attributed to Paul in the New Testament canon is that their textual relationships to each other are so problematic that the debate over whether they were both written by Paul continues to this day. To be a little more specific about authorship, today's scholarly opinions are largely divided into two leading positions. One is that Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians, while 2 Thessalonians was written by someone later than Paul and should thus be viewed as pseudonymous. The other is that Paul wrote both First and Second Thessalonians, so they should be called authentic Pauline letters.

The issue of Pauline authorship and authenticity of the Thessalonian letters was neither raised before nor immediately after their incorporation into the New Testament canon by the church. Dozens of pieces of external evidence prove that the position of both letters as Paul's writings has been maintained for almost two thousand years since the patristic period.[7] From the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the question of Pauline authorship and authenticity of 2 Thessalonians began to be raised by a group of German scholars with a modern critical approach to biblical texts.[8] Despite the solid external evidence supporting the Pauline authorship of the two Thessalonian letters, these critical scholars paid attention to internally established contradictions or inconsistencies between the two. Based on them, they began to doubt the authenticity of the second letter.

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[7] For more information about external evidence of First and Second Thessalonians regarding authorship, refer to Milligan, "Authenticity of the Second Epistle," 430–50; MacDougall, *Authenticity of 2 Thessalonians*, 31–62; Green, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 54–60.

[8] See Porter, "Developments in German and French," 312–15.

Of course, it is not that there have been no scholars who denied the Pauline authorship of both First and Second Thessalonians. Scholars such as Karl Schrader, Ferdinand Christian Baur, Bruno Bauer, C. Holsten, and Marlene Crüsemann reject the Pauline authorship of both Thessalonian letters.[9] Nonetheless, the vast majority of modern critical scholarship has suspected only 2 Thessalonians among the two Thessalonian letters as written by a pseudonymous author.

The contradictions or inconsistencies internally recognized between the two Thessalonian letters, which the modern critical scholars claim to have detected enough to dispute the Pauline authorship and authenticity of 2 Thessalonians confidently, are summarized in four points of arguments as follows. The first point is the view that the different eschatological perspectives between First and Second Thessalonians reflect their different authorships. In 1 Thessalonians, there is a strong sense of immediacy surrounding the parousia, or the second coming of Christ. However, this urgency appears to be significantly reduced in 2 Thessalonians, which instead implies a delayed parousia. Additionally, unlike the descriptions of the end times and parousia in 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians provides more specific details about particular events and figures, such as the eschatological timeline and the man of lawlessness, which must take place before the Lord's arrival. The second point is that the drastic difference in tone between the letters makes it difficult to assume that the same author wrote both letters to the same recipient. In 1 Thessalonians, the tone is marked by an abundance of gratitude towards the letter recipients, expressed in a warm and friendly manner. On the other hand, 2 Thessalonians

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[9] Schrader, *Apostel Paulus*, 23–24; Baur, "Two Epistles to the Thessalonians," 85–97; Baur, "Appendix III," 314–40; Bauer, *Kritik der paulinischen Briefe*, 89–100; Holsten, "Zur Unechtheit des Ersten Briefes," 731–32; Crüsemann, *Pseudepigraphal Letters*, 293–95.

adopts a cooler tone and a more authoritative stance. The third point is that the

remarkably close literary connections between First and Second Thessalonians make it

difficult to see 2 Thessalonians as an original Pauline work. These two letters share

substantial similarities in themes, words, phrases, and structures, often appearing

verbatim. It is conceivable that these parallels result from a later pseudonymous author

borrowing content from the first letter while composing the second. The fourth point is

the view that the emphatic authenticating comment in the final salutation of 2 Thess 3:17

cannot be attributed to Paul, especially when compared with its counterpart in 1

Thessalonians. The presence of a verification mark in 2 Thess 3:17, but its absence in 1

Thessalonians, is often regarded as a clue suggesting that the pseudonymous author may

be overcompensating or attempting to appear genuinely Pauline. As a result, readers

might interpret this discrepancy as evidence that the letter is not authentically Pauline.[10]

For these modern critical scholars, such theological and attitudinal discrepancies between

First and Second Thessalonians, literary similarities, and the emphatic authenticating

comment in the second are sufficient to leave the external evidence aside and to cause

doubts about the Pauline authorship and authenticity of the second letter. Furthermore,

these four main arguments advanced by German critical scholarship from the early

nineteenth century, along with more elaborating and supplementing arguments

throughout the twentieth century, have been adopted by a wide range of scholars in the

English-speaking world and are still regarded as firm evidence of doubting the Pauline

authorship of 2 Thessalonians.

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[10] For more detailed discussions about these four major arguments, see Hollmann, "Unechtheit," 28–38; Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" 132–37; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 3–13; Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*. 48–53.

When arguments against the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians began to emerge, scholars advocating for its authenticity also began to appear around the same time. Given the history of the debate over Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians in its relationship with 1 Thessalonians, it can be seen that the argumentation pattern of scholars defending Pauline authorship has been made mainly in two directions: the passive direction and the more active direction. Concerning the passive direction, these scholars have attempted to identify the flaws of the four major arguments advanced against the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, asserting that they are insufficiently convincing to throw doubt on its authenticity. As a way of demonstrating their lack of persuasiveness, they have provided alternative explanations in which the theological and tonal, or attitudinal, differences, literary similarities, and the allegedly strange use of the verification mark in the second make sense sufficiently from the perspective of Pauline authorship of both letters. For these scholars in favour of Pauline authorship, the concept of situation is crucial. In other words, they have responded to the arguments established against Pauline authorship, believing that substantial circumstantial changes may have occurred between the writing of First and Second Thessalonians. According to them, any supposed differences and similarities between the two Thessalonian letters are the result of a change in circumstances, not a change in author. Concerning the more active direction of the argumentation pattern for Pauline authorship, a few scholars have come up with new proposals to address the allegedly problematic issues raised by the unique textual relationship between First and Second Thessalonians. Some have suggested that the purported variances and similarities can be explained if it is assumed that the two

letters were written by the same author, Paul, for separate recipients.[11] Others have

hypothesized that by reversing the canonical order of the two Thessalonian letters, the

allegedly problematic textual relationships of the two can be resolved, which means that

2 Thessalonians must have taken precedence over 1 Thessalonians in the sequence of

writing and delivery.[12] Some others have proposed the idea of mediated authorship, a

hypothesis that Paul would have authorized one of his associates to compose our 2

Thessalonians as a follow-up letter to 1 Thessalonians, inevitably resulting in some

degree of similarity and difference between the two Pauline letters.[13]

From the history of the debate over whether Paul authored 2 Thessalonians, we

can identify three key observations. First, scholars on both sides, whether disputing or

supporting Pauline authorship and authenticity, typically base their arguments on the

assumption that the textual elements considered as internal contradictions or

inconsistencies between First and Second Thessalonians are undeniable attributes clearly

present in the texts. Since the four major arguments were first put forth and developed as

early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, the debate over the authorship of 2

Thessalonians has been primarily focused on how to address the eschatological and tonal,

or attitudinal, differences, the structural, linguistic, and thematic similarities, and the

conundrum of the emphatic authenticating comment appearing only in the second letter.

However, scholars have been little concerned with the more fundamental question as to

whether such contradictory textual elements and meanings indeed exist between the two

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[11] For example, Harnack, "Problem," 560–78; Dibelius, *An die Thessalonicher*, 57–58; Schweizer, "Der zweite Thessalonicherbriefe," 90–105.

[12] For example, West, "Order of 1 and 2 Thessalonians," 66–74; Manson, "St. Paul in Greece," 428–47; Thurston, "Relationship," 52–56; Wanamaker, *Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 37–44.

[13] For example, Donfried, "2 Thessalonians," 128–44; Donfried, "Theology of 2 Thessalonians," 81–113; Gupta, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 217–19; Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" 166–67.

letters. Neither side of the scholarly positions on Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians has brought up this question in defining the textual relationship between First and Second Thessalonians. Instead, taking for granted that the contradictions or inconsistencies professed by the earlier four major arguments are found between First and Second Thessalonians, they have mainly concentrated on how to deal with these internally generated problems and which explanations or scenarios would be more plausible.

The second observation to be drawn from the history of the controversy about the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians is that very little linguistic analysis of the issues related to the internal contradictions between First and Second Thessalonians has been attempted. This lack of linguistic concern, as seen by the scholarly discussions in approaching the problems associated with the textual relationship between First and Second Thessalonians, is manifested mainly in the following ways. From the point of view of modern linguistics, the major arguments already set forth as evidence for non-Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians more than two hundred years ago are hardly regarded to have been derived from careful examinations of the related textual components and structures in the two Thessalonian texts with a firm theoretical framework and sound methodological procedure.[14] Nevertheless, even later studies that continue to this day, either accepting those arguments with additional support or responding with a critical point of view, have not been made with a more advanced theoretical framework and sophisticated methodology, especially suitable for dealing with the grammatical and linguistic factors that have made the textual relationship between First and Second

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[14] On the implications of modern linguistics for the study of the New Testament and its fundamental principles in theoretical and methodological terms, see Porter, "Studying Ancient Languages," 147–55.

Thessalonians problematic. For these reasons, one could say that the current state of the scholarly discussions on the Pauline authorship and authenticity of 2 Thessalonians is characterized as reiterating and listing the arguments and explanations already made by previous generations.

The third observation from the history of the debate is that there have been few attempts to figure out the situations that would have affected the creation of the two Thessalonian letters in a more objective and systematic way based on the text and language use in which it is realized. Instead, most attempts have been made to reconstruct the situational contexts of First and Second Thessalonians by appealing to any speculative references to information of historical background, social setting, or cultural environment outside the Thessalonian texts as if they were the immediate historical circumstances in which the Thessalonian texts were created. In other words, many methods that have been used to identify the contexts of situations relevant to the Thessalonian texts are characterized primarily by way of directly imposing any historical, cultural, or social background elements, which are presumed to have existed at that time, or a literary situation, which is conventionally implied by a particular literary type or genre, as an interpretive lens on the Thessalonian texts. Otherwise, some have attempted to discover a conjecturable material situational setting involving actual physical environments or elements from a specific word, phrase, or idea isolated from the text as a whole and other linguistic elements to which it has a co-textual relationship and then insisted that the two Thessalonian texts may have been composed in such settings deduced from this way.

Noting these observations drawn from the history of the debate, this study attempts to bring some clarity to the complex textual relationship between First and Second Thessalonians and the related authorship issue by employing a linguistic framework that provides us with a systematically designed methodology of how to identify the different types of meaning of a text from its formal linguistic components and structures and how to generalize the context of situation that is realized by the configuration of the meanings of the text. This linguistic framework, known as Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL), suggests a method referred to as register analysis for analysing what linguistic resources and meanings are chosen to create or reflect a socio-semiotically constructed situation.[15] This is done from the bottom-up perspective by looking at how the formal linguistic resources used in the text grammatically encode their related meanings categorized as ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. These ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions, semantically realized by the corresponding grammatical systems, indicate their respective situational components consisting of field, tenor, and mode of discourse, which, from the top-down perspective, govern or constrain the formal realizations of the set of meaning potentials occurring in the text.

In SFL's theoretical framework, as registers are referred to as varieties of language according to use associated with situation types, and each register has both a register-specific semantic potential that realizes the contextual components and a register-specific grammatical potential that realizes the semantic components, a single text is

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[15] Numerous linguists and schools of linguistics have dealt with the SFL theory, and countless scholarly works have been published. Among them, for the most representative and essential works of SFL, see Halliday, *Explorations*; Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*; Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*; Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*; Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*.

approached as an instance of a particular register. In this respect, from the SFL concept of register analysis, a text is analyzed in terms of being produced and processed in the systematically realized relationship between the contextual variables, the semantic functions, and the formal lexicogrammatical resources. In SFL's terms, this realizable correlation between lexicogrammar, semantics, and context in the tri-stratal organization of language is illustrated as follows. First, the field, which is realized by the ideational meaning that is encoded by the grammatical systems such as the transitivity network and lexical items used, concerns the "what-ness" of a given discourse, involving the subject matter, what the discourse is about, and the logical arrangement of its content. Second, the tenor, which is realized by the interpersonal meaning that is encoded by the grammatical system of mood, or attitude, and participant reference structures, concerns the "who-ness" of a given discourse, involving the social roles of and relationships between the participants of discourse. Third, the mode, which is realized by the textual meaning that is grammaticalized by various organizational devices, thematization at different levels of text, and prominence resulting from formally marked elements, reflects the "how-ness" of a given discourse, which brings field and tenor together to be structured into a meaningful communicative act, and thus it is concerned with textual properties, that is, cohesive, structural, and organizational features of the discourse.

What results would then be expected from this linguistically oriented method based on the framework of SFL's register theory when approaching the authorship issue of 2 Thessalonians in its relationship with 1 Thessalonians? First, a register analysis of both First and Second Thessalonians would clarify if the semantic and grammatical properties characterized by the four major arguments against the Pauline authorship of 2

Thessalonians really occur in both Thessalonian letters. From an analysis of the lexis occurring in the texts and the clausal structures and meanings according to the transitivity network, it will be examined more clearly, or hopefully more objectively, whether the experiential phenomenon of the parousia is indeed construed ideationally as imminent in 1 Thessalonians but, on the other hand, as delayed in the second. Also, an analytical observation from the field analysis of 2 Thessalonians at the discourse level would help deal with the issue of the emphatic authenticating comment in the way of asking what is happening in the field of the discourse of 2 Thessalonians when the author leaves such a final signature as an essential component in creating the text. A tenor analysis of a text refers to the clause types and their meanings according to the grammatical mood system through which attitudinal semantics and speech functions are derived, the lexical specification of the participants introduced in the text, and the grammatical indication of the participants mainly from the grammatical case system. The tenor analysis of First and Second Thessalonians will help not only perceive how the participants in them enact interpersonal relationships with each other but also shed light on assessing whether the tenor of 1 Thessalonians is represented by a warm and friendly relationship between the participants but that of 2 Thessalonians by the author's harsh and authoritarian attitude towards the addressees. An analysis of the textual meaning relates to a text's structural and organizational properties that are realized by the grammatical and semantic systems involving cohesion, thematizing patterns in presenting themes at different levels of the text, and relative degrees of prominence among various linguistic items. This analytical approach to First and Second Thessalonians will help evaluate one of the major arguments made against the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians that there are

remarkable similarities in terms of literary, structural, and thematic features between First and Second Thessalonians in a more rigorous manner and provide more robust evidence in defining the literary relationship between them. In sum, if analytical results from a register analysis of First and Second Thessalonians demonstrate that any semantic and grammatical issues raised by the four major arguments against the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians do not exist between the Thessalonian texts in the first place, the arguments and evidence against Pauline authorship may be called into question.

The second outcome that can be anticipated from a register analysis of First and Second Thessalonians is that the context of the situation, defined as the immediate and relevant situational context in which each Thessalonian discourse would have taken place, can be more objectively identified based on the formal lexicogrammatical elements and their semantic representations in the texts. This approach would be more reliable than relying on broad and vague historical, cultural, or social references outside the Thessalonian texts without critical examination. The exploration of these extra-textual spheres should begin with the configuration of contextual features as construed by the text, rather than imposing these external factors onto the text from the beginning. More importantly, a register analysis of First and Second Thessalonians will help describe what particular type of register each Thessalonian text instantiates and thus what general situation type is construed by each. When described in terms of the concept of register theory, for most scholars who deny the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, the discrepancies between the registers of First and Second Thessalonians as to the contextual variables of field, tenor, and mode, reflected by the allegedly contradictory grammatical and semantic components to each other, should be so evident that it is

difficult to believe that they were written by the same author to the same recipients within a short space of time. If the texts of First and Second Thessalonians, however, instantiate the same particular register type and so reflect similar situation types to each other regarding field, tenor, and mode in general, the alleged textual and situational contradictions pointed out by the arguments against the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians may be called into question.

By analyzing the registers of the texts of First and Second Thessalonians, this study argues that, unlike the major arguments brought up against the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians as well as other arguments in defence of Pauline authorship, First and Second Thessalonians instantiate the same particular register type and realize similar situational types to each other in terms of the contextual values of field, tenor, and mode, and thus they were written by the single author, Paul, and addressed to the same Thessalonian believers within a short period of time. The register shared by First and Second Thessalonians is characterized by a particular type of language that serves three main social functions. First, it communicates Paul and his mission team's immediate and ongoing pastoral care and teachings for the Thessalonian believers, even though they were forcibly separated from one another (field). Second, the language shared by the registers of First and Second Thessalonians confirms and maintains a close and profound relationship between Paul and the Thessalonian believers, even amid continued suffering and persecution, while also establishing equal roles in spreading the gospel and nurturing church members (tenor). Third, the two Thessalonian registers follow a common organizational flow as a cohesive semantic unit. They begin with greetings and thanksgivings to establish a positive orientation between Paul and the Thessalonians, then

address key issues that Paul believes are crucial for the Thessalonian church. This is followed by exhortative or paraenetic directives to encourage appropriate behaviors and adherence to his teachings, and ends with a final greeting and a few additional requests (mode).

In the course of developing this statement, this study will also advance the following arguments in response to the queries regarding the textual problems between First and Second Thessalonians raised in the major arguments challenging the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians. First, in addressing the day of the Lord, neither the register of 1 Thessalonians nor that of 2 Thessalonians construes the parousia as either imminent or deferred. Therefore, to claim the pseudonymous authorship of 2 Thessalonians pointing out the difference in eschatological timing regarding the parousia is not a reasonable argument from the outset. Second, the tenor of the register in 2 Thessalonians, like that of 1 Thessalonians, reflects a very close and affectionate relationship between the author and the recipients. Therefore, it is not reasonable to claim that 2 Thessalonians was written by a pseudonymous author based on a difference in tone or attitude between the two Thessalonian letters. Third, the individual texts of First and Second Thessalonians differ in terms of text structure, thematic patterning, and linguistic prominence. Therefore, there is little certainty of literary and thematic similarities between the two letters to the extent that a pseudonymous author could have simply copied and pasted from the first to the second. If there is a similarity between First and Second Thessalonians, it is due to the register-specific structure potential and register-specific semantic potential since these two epistolary texts instantiate the same particular register type. The literary similarity argument stems from confusion in distinguishing

between the textual structure and meaning occurring in an individual text and the register-specific structure and semantic potentials governing or controlling the activation of the textual structure in the single text. Finally, regarding the so-called emphatic authenticating comment of 2 Thess 3:17, in a formal structural sense, adding a semantic weight of "emphatic" to this statement itself does not fit the clause complex structure in which it is located, since it is grammaticalized in a secondary relative clause subordinate to the nominal group with the headterm, ὁ ἀσπασμός, which is frontgrounded by being introduced as a new theme and placed in prime position in this clause complex structure. Thus, the semantically exaggerated claim that the author is overcompensating or trying too hard to appear genuinely Pauline is not supported by the structural feature of this clause complex. Instead, this secondary relative clause should be understood first in the co-textual context of the clause complex structure in which it is placed, which frontgrounds an experiential entity of greeting most prominently that exemplifies a relational exchange between communicative participants for engaging in a specific form of social contact with each other.

To develop my arguments in addressing the issue of Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians discussed in its relation to 1 Thessalonians in more detail and depth, this study will be conducted according to the following structure. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 will discuss the history of the debate over the authorship and authenticity of 2 Thessalonians by reviewing the representative arguments that have been raised for the pseudonymous authorship of the letter, as well as the rebutting arguments against them made by those who are in favour of its authentic Pauline authorship, along with evaluations of these scholarly discussions in terms of theoretical propositions and

methodological approaches. Chapter 3 will provide an overview of the SFL concept of discourse analysis with reference to a tripartite field-tenor-mode register analysis model this study adopts for addressing the authorship question of 2 Thessalonians, particularly presenting the further modelled methodological framework and analytical procedures adapted for the Greek of the New Testament. Chapters 4 and 5 will give a full textual analysis of First and Second Thessalonians, respectively, based on the methodological framework outlined in Chapter 3 to identify what register type each Thessalonian text instantiates and what situation type is represented by each. Chapter 6 will integrate the analytical results obtained from the register analysis of First and Second Thessalonians and discuss what implications and interpretive consequences they have in establishing the textual relationship between First and Second Thessalonians and defining the authorship of 2 Thessalonians.

CHAPTER 2: MAJOR ARGUMENTS IN THE AUTHORSHIP DEBATE OF 2
THESSALONIANS IN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH 1 THESSALONIANS

Preliminary Considerations

This chapter provides a historical overview of the controversy over whether 2

Thessalonians is a pseudonymous Pauline letter or an authentic Pauline letter.[1] However,

this survey will not deal with a summary of the related literature and hypotheses by

simply listing chronologically who made what claims at what time, since other scholars

have sufficiently performed this task, and thus it would not be beneficial to repeat it

here.[2] Instead, the following historical overview of the question of the authorship of 2

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[1] As early as the mid-nineteenth century, Baur divided the thirteen letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament into three groups based on their purported authenticity, distinguishing between those believed to be genuinely written by Paul and those that are not. Baur's historical reconstructions primarily divided the early Christian church into Pauline and Petrine forms of Christianity, based on his belief that this division stemmed from Paul's conflict with Judaistic forms of Christianity. Based on this historical conjecture, Baur defined only four letters (Romans, First and Second Corinthians, and Galatians) as Pauline canon, six letters (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First and Second Thessalonians, and Philemon) as controversial, and the remaining three letters (the Pastoral Epistles) as forgeries. See Baur, "Introduction," 246–48. Most contemporary critical scholars and commentators, however, do not accept such a narrow range of authentic Pauline writings as Baur categorizes. Instead, they reclassify the thirteen letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament by expanding the scope of books that could fall into the category of the Pauline canon beyond that of Baur. Consequently, they classify seven letters (Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon) as undisputed Pauline letters, three letters (Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians) as highly disputed, and the Pastoral Epistles as undoubtedly inauthentic. This classification designates Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians as deutero-Pauline letters, which are considered distant from the Pauline thought expressed in the undisputed Pauline letters. They then situate the Pastoral Epistles as trito-Pauline letters, placing them in the most distant category from the typical Pauline thoughts and expressions in the undisputed Pauline letters. In any case, 2 Thessalonians remains questionable as to its Pauline authorship and authenticity in both the classifications outlined by Baur and later modern contemporary scholarship. For further discussion of how modern critical scholarship since Baur has classified Pauline letters as authentic and inauthentic, see Brown, *Introduction*, 6; Gombis, *Paul*, 3; Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 156–57; Stamps, "Pauline Letters." 265–66.

[2] Nevertheless, if we consider, at least briefly, the historical flow of modern critical scholarship questioning the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians in a chronological sense, it can be roughly divided into three significant periods, with prominent scholars representing each phase with their distinctive arguments. The first argument, advanced by Johann Ernst Christian Schmidt in the early nineteenth century, raised concerns about the eschatology presented in First and Second Thessalonians as a basis for

Thessalonians will proceed by organizing the sections around the four major arguments

that both sides of the scholarly debate have addressed regarding whether the letter was

written by Paul or by a pseudonymous author after his time.[3] In doing so, it will examine

doubting the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians. The second argument, advanced by William Wrede in the early twentieth century, raised doubts about the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians by emphasizing its literary, structural, and thematic similarities to 1 Thessalonians. Finally, in the mid-to-late twentieth century, Wolfgang Trilling presented an argument that defined 2 Thessalonians as a pseudepigraphic, didactic letter not intended for a particular church community. Trilling's argument was based on a form-critical analysis of the letter, positing internal contradictions between First and Second Thessalonians regarding their eschatological perspective, tone and attitude, literary and thematic similarities, and the unusual use of an emphatic authenticating comment in 2 Thess 3:17. In particular, Trilling integrated the arguments that had been sporadically presented by various critical scholars into the form of four major arguments and characterized their evidentiary features with the concept of cumulative effect in proving the pseudonymous character of 2 Thessalonians. Moreover, in addition to presenting the four major arguments as a cumulative set of evidence for denying Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, Trilling offered various theological, historical, and stylistic factors that had not previously been seriously considered. After the publication of his works, the position of rejecting 2 Thessalonians as written by Paul, which had been advanced primarily by German critical scholarship, began to be widely accepted by scholars in the English-speaking world. See Schmidt, "Vermutungen," 159–61; Baur, "Two Epistles to the Thessalonians," 85–97; Wrede, *Authenticity*; Trilling, *Untersuchungen*; Trilling, *zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher*. For a historical overview of the debate over the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians in the context of the early twentieth century, see Frame, *Thessalonians*, 39–43. For a historical survey of the debate conducted in the pre-Trilling period, see Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 124–52; Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, 368–72; Trilling, *Untersuchungen*, 11–45. For a historical examination of the controversy at the time of and immediately after Trilling, see Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 28–45; Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 3–18; Wanamaker, *Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 17–28. For information on the latest scholarly trends regarding the authorship debate of 2 Thessalonians, see Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" 150–75; Gupta, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 197–220; Brookins, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 138–50.

[3] As noted in the introductory chapter above, most critical scholars have rejected the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians mainly because of the internally established contradictions between the two Thessalonian letters, which they summarize in four major arguments. First, the difference in eschatological perspective between First and Second Thessalonians. Second, the radical change in tone and attitude from a friendly and affectionate atmosphere in 1 Thessalonians to a colder and more authoritative stance in 2 Thessalonians. Third, the literary dependence of 2 Thessalonians on 1 Thessalonians because of the striking similarities between them in terms of vocabulary, literary structure, and theme. Fourth, the presence of an emphatic authenticating comment in 2 Thess 3:17. The sum of these four arguments to deny the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians dates back to the early twentieth century when Georg Hollmann published an article in 1904. In it, he confidently argues that these four reasons rule out the possibility that 2 Thessalonians was written by Paul's hand. See Hollmann, "Unechtheit," 28–38. In an article published in the same year as Hollman's, George Milligan disputes the idea that these four arguments are sufficient to deny the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians. According to Milligan, the view that Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians himself can fully resolve the problematic issues raised by the seemingly contradictory elements between First and Second Thessalonians, which Hollmann described as the so-called four major arguments against the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians. Furthermore, since the external evidence also clearly indicates its Pauline authorship, it is correct for Milligan to see that Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians. See Milligan, "Authenticity of the Second Epistle," 430–50. However, the position of defending Pauline authorship on the basis of external evidence, like Milligan's, did not appeal much to the following critical scholars. Instead, the alleged four arguments have been consistently reaffirmed by later scholars such as John A. Bailey, Raymond F. Collins, and Maarten J. J. Menken, in addition to Trilling. See Bailey, "Who

the methodological assumptions behind these major arguments that each side uses to

support its own view of the authorship of 2 Thessalonians.[4] From this examination, this

chapter will provide the theoretical background for the need for a linguistically oriented

methodology in addressing the question of the authorship of 2 Thessalonians, which

arises from its textual relationship to 1 Thessalonians.

Wrote II Thessalonians?" 131–45; Collins, "Second Epistle," 209–41; Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 27–43.

[4] Of course, in addition to the four major arguments to be discussed here, other textual factors have been raised against the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians. Since the mid-twentieth century, some scholars and commentators have become interested in style analysis, especially with the advent of computers. As a methodological approach, they have compared the style of First and Second Thessalonians with other letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament, mainly in terms of vocabulary and occasionally in terms of syntax. However, because the results of various forms of stylistic or statistical studies of words and phrases or sentences have been inconclusive and sometimes contradictory, as Nijay K. Gupta assesses, almost all scholars today give little weight to the stylistic argument based on statistical studies. See Gupta, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 207. For example, K. Grayston and G. Herdan's statistical linguistic approach shows that both First and Second Thessalonians share the same style with the undisputed Pauline letters. However, A. Q. Morton and James McLeman argue that the words used in both letters are different from the supposedly authentic Pauline letters. See Grayston and Herdan, "Authorship of the Pastorals," 1–15; Morton and McLeman, *Christianity in the Computer Age*, 565–66. Like Grayston and Herdan, Earl J. Richard claims that 2 Thessalonians contains several peculiar words that he considers to be un-Pauline characters. See Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 22. With an interest in style in syntax, Edgar Krentz, drawing on the work of Trilling, offered a long list of peculiar phrases in 2 Thessalonians as evidence for its non-Pauline authorship. See Krentz, "Stone That Will Not Fit," 445–46; Krentz, "2 Thessalonians," 518–19. On the other hand, while Richard points out the use of simple theological phrases in 2 Thessalonians that seem to be the product of a pseudonymous author, Raymond E. Brown argues that 2 Thessalonians is characterized by more complex and longer sentences than 1 Thessalonians. See Brown, *Introduction*, 593. Meanwhile, D. L. Mealand presents a measure of the closeness of the stylistic relationships among the thirteen letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament, as to what degree of distance would infer a difference in style and then authorship. On First and Second Thessalonians, Mealand concludes that 1 Thessalonians seems to be further away than 2 Thessalonians by the criteria of the Pauline style in general. See Mealand "Extent of the Pauline Corpus," 61–92. On the other hand, Christina M. Kreinecker, comparing some of the verbs used in First and Second Thessalonians with those in the documentary papyri, argues that the verbs in 1 Thessalonians follow the patterns found in the contemporary documentary papyri. In contrast, the verbs used in 2 Thessalonians do not. Thus, Kreinecker hypothesizes that the verb forms and their various uses in 2 Thessalonians suggest that the letter contains an unprecedented style that breaks with the conventions of Paul's time. So it would have been written after the first century AD by a forger who borrowed Paul's name. See Kreinecker, "Imitation Hypothesis," 197–220. In addition to these inconclusive and contradictory results from the use of statistics, the problems of adequate sample size in producing meaningful statistical analysis and the lack of objective criteria for defining Pauline styles in determining stylistic coherence and deviation have made the use of statistical methods inappropriate for the question of the authorship and authenticity of 2 Thessalonians. For criticism of the use of simple statistical studies, conducted without methodological sophistication and linguistic grounds, in the Pauline authorship debate, see O'Donnell, "Linguistic Fingerprints," 206–62; Pitts, "Style and Pseudonymity," 113–52; Porter, "Pauline Authorship," 109–10; Libby, "Disentangling Authorship," 2–6. van Nes, *Pauline Language*, 76–110. For these reasons, the historical overview of the 2 Thessalonians authorship debate to be discussed in this chapter will not deal with stylistic issues based on statistical studies. Instead, it will focus on the four major arguments mentioned above.

Before considering the main arguments, it would be helpful to briefly examine general aspects that have been identified in the authorship debate surrounding the Thessalonian correspondence, which may also reveal its peculiarities in comparison to the authorship debates surrounding other Pauline letters. D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo note that when it comes to the writings attributed to Paul in the New Testament, especially regarding Pauline authorship and authenticity, most modern critical scholars consider the letters to the Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians to be the most controversial Pauline letters after the Pastoral Epistles. Therefore, as Carson and Moo note, they typically exclude these letters from the seven-letter Pauline canon-within-a-canon, following modern critical orthodoxy on Pauline authorship.[5] These modern critical scholars have given various reasons why these letters, including the Pastoral Epistles, cannot be part of the so-called Pauline canon. Most of the reasons are based on a comparison of their theological, historical, and linguistic features with those of other Pauline letters whose authorship is not questioned. Compared to other disputed Pauline letters, however, the nature of the argument against Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians is unique. This means that modern critical scholars have primarily considered the problematic issues arising from the textual relationship between First and Second Thessalonians as a major reason for excluding the second letter from the Pauline canon.[6]

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[5] Carson and Moo, *Introduction to New Testament*, 536.

[6] The Pauline authorship of Ephesians, Colossians, and the Pastoral Epistles has been questioned, usually because of their theological, historical, and linguistic inconsistencies with the supposed seven authentic Pauline epistles or, in the case of the Pastoral Epistles, even with the highly disputed letters in terms of Pauline authorship. On the other hand, the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians has been questioned primarily because of the internal contradictions in its textual relationship to 1 Thessalonians. To put it another way, while the pseudonymous authorship of Ephesians, Colossians, and the Pastoral Epistles has been asserted by reference to every Pauline letter in the New Testament, the pseudonymous authorship of 2 Thessalonians has been maintained primarily by reference to 1 Thessalonians. Such features suggest that the range of references used to judge the authorship of 2 Thessalonians is narrower and more specific than that of other allegedly pseudonymous Pauline letters. From another point of view, such a distinctive

For this reason, Collins comments that the heart of the question of Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians lies in its relationship to 1 Thessalonians.[7] Modern scholars involved in the 2 Thessalonians authorship debate since the early nineteenth century have divided such problematic issues into four major arguments. The following subsections address each of these four arguments in more detail. As will be seen in the discussion below, the scholarly debate over who wrote 2 Thessalonians has focused on how to explain the seemingly contradictory elements of the two Thessalonian letters to each other in a way that the participating scholars and commentators consider to be the most reasonable and plausible. In the process, they have made various suggestions as to whether the alleged internal problems between the two letters are due to differences in authorship or to deliberate variations by the same author, Paul.

The Difference in Eschatology between First and Second Thessalonians

Most scholars agree that Johann Ernst Christian Schmidt was the first to raise doubts about the Pauline authorship and authenticity of 2 Thessalonians.[8] In his work published in 1801, Schmidt argues that the theological perspectives of the two Thessalonian letters

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relational feature between First and Second Thessalonians, especially with regard to the question of authorship, places these two letters in a unique position within the Pauline corpus of the New Testament when compared with First and Second Corinthians and First and Second Timothy. Modern critical scholars consider both of the Corinthian letters to be authentic Pauline letters, while both First and Second Timothy are inauthentic. On the other hand, they determine the authorship of First and Second Thessalonians differently from the letters to Corinthians and Timothy. They consider 1 Thessalonians to be an authentic Pauline letter, while 2 Thessalonians is a highly controversial Pauline letter, even though these two letters specify themselves as addressed to the same recipient, as do the letters to the Corinthians and Timothy.

[7] Collins, "Second Epistle," 210. Similarly, Stanley E. Porter notes, "The history of discussion of 2 Thessalonians often revolves around its relationship with 1 Thessalonians, and this influences such issues as authorship and authenticity" (*Apostle Paul*, 156–57). Frank Witt Hughes also says, "The central problems dealt with by modern interpretation of the Thessalonian letters are their relation to each other and their authorship" ("Thessalonians," 568).

[8] See Thiselton, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 12; Hughes, "Thessalonians," 569; Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" 154.

on the parousia, or second coming of the Lord, are so different that it is difficult to attribute them to the same author.[9] Schmidt reads 1 Thess 4:13—5:11 as depicting the imminent return of Christ, referring to verses such as 4:13 and 4:17, where Paul seems to anticipate the occurrence of the parousia during his lifetime, and 5:1, which portrays the day of the Lord as one that will come suddenly without warning, like a thief in the night. On the other hand, for Schmidt, this imminent character of the parousia of Christ presented in 1 Thessalonians becomes much less intense in 2 Thessalonians, to the point of being called a delayed parousia of Christ. Schmidt derives the reason for seeing the parousia described in 2 Thessalonians as delayed primarily from 2 Thess 2:1–12. According to Schmidt, in 2 Thess 2:2 the author denies that the day of the Lord has now arrived.[10] Also, throughout the passage, the author mentions specific apocalyptic events and figures, such as the eschatological timeline, the man of lawlessness, and the restrainer, that must take place before the coming of the Lord.[11] For Schmidt, it is highly implausible that the same author would have conveyed these different theological ideas to the same recipients; therefore, it is impossible to believe that such contradictory eschatological views of the parousia were developed and produced by the same author, Paul. For this reason, Schmidt disputes the long-held belief that Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians shortly after 1 Thessalonians. He finds it hard to believe that Paul could have changed his view of the day of the Lord from imminent to postponed so quickly in these two successive letters to the same recipients.[12] When it comes to authorship, Schmidt contends that the eschatological hope for the imminent return of the Lord in 1

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[9] Schmidt, "Vermutungen," 159.
[10] Schmidt, "Vermutungen," 159–60.
[11] Schmidt, "Vermutungen," 160.
[12] Schmidt, "Vermutungen," 160.

Thessalonians is closest to Paul's original thought on the parousia. In contrast, the

descriptions of various apocalyptic figures and events before Christ's return in 2

Thessalonians are those that come from a non-Pauline eschatology. Schmidt speculates

that the description of the coming of the antichrist, referred to in 2 Thessalonians as the

man of lawlessness, and related apocalyptic events may have been linked to Montanist

ideas. Based on this assumption, Schmidt hypothesizes that someone associated with the

Montanists probably inserted the current passage of 2 Thess 2:1–12 into an original

Pauline letter.[13] In this regard, Schmidt first argued that only 2 Thess 2:1–12 was a later

Montanist interpolation and that the rest of the book was authentically Pauline. However,

as Gottlieb Lünemann pointed out in 1880, Schmidt later concluded that the entire book

of 2 Thessalonians was not authentically Pauline.[14]

Schmidt's argument has had a long-lasting impact on later scholars as a crucial

issue in establishing the textual relationship between First and Second Thessalonians and

in determining authorship. Since Schmidt, modern scholarship in Thessalonian studies

has been divided primarily into two positions on the authorship and authenticity of 2

Thessalonians. One position holds that the descriptions of the various apocalyptic figures

and events that would take place before the coming of the Lord in 2 Thessalonians are

non-Pauline views of eschatology. Thus, 2 Thessalonians was not written by Paul, but by

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[13] Schmidt, "Vermutungen," 161. Schmidt points to Irenaeus and Tertullian, who are widely regarded as the first patriarchs to quote the passage from 2 Thessalonians in their works, as evidence for the interpolation of 2 Thess 2:1–12 into an authentic letter of Paul by a Montanist pseudepigrapher. Schmidt believes that they were in some way associated with the Montanists. For more information on this matter, see MacDougall, *Authenticity of 2 Thessalonians*, 1–2; Tooth, "Suddenness and Signs," 258.

[14] Lünemann, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook*, 568. According to MacDougall's research, Lünemann was referring to Schmidt's later work, *Einleitung zur Neues Testament*, published in 1804, in which he argued that not only 2 Thess 2:1–12, but the entire book of 2 Thessalonians was written by a pseudonymous author. See MacDougall, *Authenticity of 2 Thessalonians*, 2.

a pseudonymous author who used Paul's name for some purposes.[15] The opposite

position also recognizes that the two Thessalonian letters have different eschatological

timelines and apocalyptic descriptions from each other. But it considers that certain

circumstantial factors must have intervened between the writing of the two letters by the

same author. In other words, Paul must have had a reason to convey a modified or

enhanced version of eschatology from the first to the second letter to the same

Thessalonian believers. In order to maintain their scholarly positions regarding the textual

relationship between First and Second Thessalonians and authorship, modern scholars on

both sides have advanced their arguments with various types of evidence that they claim

to be compelling. As we will see below, much of the evidence they used to support or

refute the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians came from extraneous sources outside

the Thessalonian texts and historical inferences. In other cases, some have turned to

textual analysis, usually focusing on how identifying differences in literary type or genre

between the two Thessalonian texts might explain why they hold opposing views on

eschatological expectations and apocalyptic events. Since Schmidt's time, modern

scholars have debated the authorship and authenticity of 2 Thessalonians, using such

methodological approaches to explain the differing views on eschatological timing and

end-time events related to the second coming of Christ in First and Second

Thessalonians. From this point on, I will examine how later modern critical scholars have

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[15] While Schmidt's discussion of the conflicting eschatological perspectives and related textual elements between First and Second Thessalonians has been considered crucial evidence in favour of the non-Pauline authorship view of 2 Thessalonians, his Montanist pseudepigraphic hypothesis has not gained wide acceptance among later critical scholars. Instead, most, if not all, believe that the actual author of 2 Thessalonians was probably a sympathetic follower of Paul or a member of the Pauline school of unknown identity in the post-Pauline era, which spans from the late first century to the early second century. Nevertheless, their suggestions for identifying the author of the letter aim to strengthen and corroborate Schmidt's conclusion that Paul did not write 2 Thessalonians.

presented a variety of evidence from different perspectives to support and substantiate

Schmidt's eschatological argument that challenges the Pauline authorship and

authenticity of 2 Thessalonians. Next, I will examine the counterarguments of scholars

who support the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, focusing on their interpretation of

the eschatological accounts in the two letters.

  As noted above, critical scholars who support the non-Pauline authorship view of

2 Thessalonians have built on Schmidt's argument about the conflicting eschatological

views between the two letters, offering various explanations and methods. These

explanations have been developed mainly in four distinctive aspects. The first aspect

observed in explaining the non-Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians in relation to

eschatology is based on the argument that the very eschatological ideas and apocalyptic

language in 2 Thessalonians demonstrate its pseudonymous authorship in comparison to

other letters attributed to Paul as well as 1 Thessalonians. The second aspect revolves

around the belief that the apocalyptic language used in 2 Thessalonians reflects a second-

generation understanding of eschatology or a different situation than that presented in 1

Thessalonians. The third aspect concerns the question of the historical plausibility of the

view that 2 Thessalonians was written by Paul around 50–51 AD, arguing that the

eschatological visions and apocalyptic figures found in the letter reflect the historical

circumstances of a later period than that of Paul. The fourth aspect deals with the literary

features of 2 Thessalonians, claiming that an analysis of its literary structures, types, and

the resulting literary and rhetorical situations reveals the pseudonymous authorship of the

letter.

In the case of the first aspect mentioned regarding reasons for denying Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, the most common methodological approach used by later scholars is to compare the eschatological accounts in 2 Thessalonians with those found in 1 Thessalonians and other letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament. As a guiding presupposition, modern critical scholars find problematic the eschatological timetable and related apocalyptic events and figures described in 2 Thessalonians, since they are absent not only from 1 Thessalonians but also from other Pauline letters. Accordingly, they take issue with the portrayals of the sequence of eschatological events that will take place before Christ's second coming, as they lack coherence with Paul's broader theological framework. A typical argument in favour of this view has been made by Krentz, who contends that while Paul usually refrains from using any time calculation devices, even when he uses various apocalyptic language elsewhere, there is a notable departure from this pattern in 2 Thess 2:1–12.[16] For this reason, Krentz believes that 2 Thessalonians was probably not written by Paul, and many critical scholars share this view.[17]

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[16] Krentz, "Stone That Will Not Fit," 464–66.

[17] Linda McKinnish Bridges considers conflicting interpretive conclusions about the relationship between First and Second Thessalonians that might be reached depending on how one handles the eschatological time calculating devices in 2 Thessalonians. She says, "The author of 2 Thessalonians establishes a precise eschatological timetable, which suggests that either Paul has changed his mind from the time of writing the first letter or the letter is not from Paul" (*1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 196). According to her analysis, the author of 2 Thessalonians uses highly descriptive and systematic apocalyptic language and invokes related imagery to outline a sequence of events that must take place before the end. These descriptions signal a slowing down and a shift in the pace of the parousia from the imminent arrival of the end times found in 1 Thessalonians and other Pauline letters whose Pauline authorship is undisputed. Based on her analysis and observations, McKinnish Bridges shares the doubts of other critical scholars about the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians. Harold Elijah Littleton ("Function of Apocalyptic," 148–51), meanwhile, addressed the question of the authorship of 2 Thessalonians, raised by its unique eschatological perspective, by focusing on his understanding of the functions of apocalyptic language commonly found in the writings attributed to Paul. Littleton contends that one of the basic functions of apocalyptic imagery in the Pauline letters is to create a sense of urgency among the letter recipients about the imminent parousia of Christ. This leads Littleton to believe that Paul must have avoided presenting eschatological time frame speculations that might lessen the sense of urgency regarding the impending end. When 2 Thessalonians is read with this function in mind, it becomes clear that its eschatological ideas and the apocalyptic language associated with them function to create an indeterminate sense of the future, to show that the end is not at hand, and to discourage readers from clinging to eschatological expectations. Essentially, the author does

The second aspect of the argument against the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, supported by later critical scholars, focuses primarily on the circumstantial dimensions of the letter in relation to its eschatological ideas and related apocalyptic language. Modern critical scholars believe that the apocalyptic language and imagery used in 2 Thessalonians reflects a second-generation understanding of eschatology and a different set of circumstances in which eschatological teachings are presented compared to 1 Thessalonians. Glenn S. Holland contends that the author of 2 Thessalonians was attempting to correct an erroneous interpretation of the earlier eschatological tradition, including that of 1 Thessalonians, which had arisen in part because of the delay of the parousia. To this end, the pseudonymous author invoked elements of Jewish apocalypticism.[18] Taking Holland's perspective into account, it can be suggested that living a morally disordered life due to eschatological misunderstandings is a phenomenon that occurs only after a considerable period of time has elapsed since the initial expectation of the Lord's imminent return, as taught in 1 Thessalonians, has passed and belief in the immediate return of Christ has gradually faded.[19] For this reason, the traditional view that Paul wrote First and Second Thessalonians between 50 to 51 AD and within a short period of time has become doubtful. In addition, C. F. M. Deeleman questions the likelihood of Paul writing a letter to a church composed primarily of Gentile believers that includes references to a predicted Jewish antichrist, identified in 2 Thessalonians as the man of lawlessness who proclaims himself divine in the temple of

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not expect Christ's return to happen soon, as he explicitly rejects such a notion, preferring instead to focus on the present. In other words, although the author uses apocalyptic language and imagery revolving around the parousia, he is unconcerned with its urgency and immediacy. Therefore, according to Littleton's conclusion, Paul is not the author of 2 Thessalonians.

[18] Holland, *Tradition that You Received*, 92–94. See also Holland, "Let No One Deceive You," 339–41.

[19] Holland, *Tradition that You Received*, 99–100.

God but is ultimately destroyed at the return of the Lord, since these themes draw heavily from Jewish apocalyptic traditions.[20] According to Deeleman, the main elements related to apocalyptic events and figures that appear throughout 2 Thess 2:1–12 share similarities with those found in the works of patriarchs such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Victorinus, and Tertullian. By examining apocalyptic traditions in Jewish, New Testament, and early church sources, Deeleman concludes that the Didache is the most likely source of 2 Thess 2:1–12, suggesting that 2 Thessalonians was written around 130 AD.[21]

The third aspect observed in later critical scholars' explanations for the non-Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians has to do with the historical plausibility problems that arise from attributing 2 Thessalonians to Paul. For example, as an illustrative argument in this explanatory aspect, Friedrich Kern focuses on the man of lawlessness mentioned in 2 Thess 2:3–10 and posits that he was an actual historical figure. He then tries to identify this person among the Roman emperors who reigned during the first century AD.[22] Based on a historical analysis that links the apocalyptic figures and events symbolically presented in 2 Thess 2:1–12 to real historical figures and events, Kern suggests that the letter's portrayal of the man of lawlessness refers to the Nero myth. This is a legend in which the Emperor Nero is said to have died in 68 AD, but to have returned from the East, specifically from Jerusalem.[23] For Kern, since Paul was executed in AD 64 and the prophecy of the man of lawlessness as the return of Nero probably came after his

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[20] Deeleman, "2 Thess. 2:1–12," 270.

[21] Deeleman, "2 Thess. 2:1–12," 270–76. Similarly, Christian Rauch supports the view of non-Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, claiming that the letter was written from a Judeo-Christian standpoint with the intention of repositioning Pauline eschatology in that context. From this perspective, Rauch sees the letter as useful evidence of early Christian eschatology in the early part of the second century. As for the date of its composition, he estimates that it was written later than Revelation and earlier than Epistle of Barnabas. See Rauch, "Zurn zweiten Thessalonicherbrief," 451–65.

[22] See Kern, "Über 2. Thess 2,1–12," 210–14.

[23] Kern, "Über 2. Thess 2,1–12," 175–92.

death in AD 68, it would be improbable for Paul to be the author of 2 Thessalonians.[24]

On the other hand, Andries van Aarde has a different interpretation of the man of

lawlessness, identifying him as a figure of authority in the Sadducean hierarchy who

declares himself to be a god while sitting in the temple.[25] According to van Aarde, the

passage in 2 Thessalonians that speaks of the man of lawlessness symbolizes the

Sadducean temple authority, with the Roman administration serving as the restrainer of

this villainous character.[26] Therefore, Aarde recognizes 2 Thessalonians as a

pseudonymous letter designed to encourage an anti-Sadducean attitude.

The fourth explanatory aspect in support of the non-Pauline authorship view of 2

Thessalonians regarding eschatology involves addressing the contrasting literary features

between the two Thessalonian letters and attributing these differences to differences in

authorship. According to Frank Witt Hughes, who has used rhetorical criticism to analyze

the texts of First and Second Thessalonians and their rhetorical structures, the text type of

the first letter is identified as epideictic rhetoric, meaning that the author uses it to praise

and reinforce the strong relationship he has with the recipients. In contrast, the text type

of the second letter is characterized as deliberative rhetoric because its author uses it to

persuade the recipients to reject certain claims and accept his point of view.[27] Hughes

argues that the rhetorical situation in 2 Thessalonians, as reconstructed through his

rhetorical analysis of the text, reflects the power and control struggles within the Pauline

churches in the post-Pauline era, not the letter sent to the church in Thessalonica in the

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[24] Kern, "Über 2. Thess 2,1–12," 206–7.

[25] See van Aarde, "Second Letter to the Thessalonians," 105–36.

[26] van Aarde, "Second Letter to the Thessalonians," 135.

[27] See Hughes, "Rhetoric of 1 Thessalonians," 94–95; Hughes, "Social World of 2 Thessalonians," 105–11; Hughes, *Early Christin Rhetoric*, 76–77.

province of Macedonia, which Paul had founded on his second missionary journey and established a positive relationship with its members. With Hughes's hypothesis in mind, the author of 2 Thessalonians vehemently criticizes his opponents, who are also in Pauline circles, for their divergent views and misunderstandings on end-time matters. This conflict reveals an underlying struggle between the author and his opponents as he seeks to counter their competing eschatologies through the text of 2 Thessalonians.[28] As for the eschatological timeline of the end and the parousia, while his opponents probably argued that the day of the Lord was imminent or had already arrived, the author of 2 Thessalonians refutes this idea and argues that the day of the Lord is not at hand.[29] Through these observations and analyses, Hughes contends that the eschatological perspectives of First and Second Thessalonians differ significantly, and that differences in author, text type, rhetorical situation, and historical context can explain their different eschatological perspectives.

Based on what has been discussed so far, the argument against the Pauline authorship and authenticity of 2 Thessalonians was initially based on its allegedly deviant eschatology, which differs from the typical Pauline eschatology found in other Pauline letters as well as in 1 Thessalonians. Subsequently, this argument has been reinforced by later critical scholars through a variety of explanations. As they see it, the eschatology of 2 Thessalonians is considered deviant because of its construal of the parousia as deferred

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[28] Hughes, *Early Christin Rhetoric*, 85.

[29] Hughes, *Early Christin Rhetoric*, 83. Holland argues for the inauthenticity of 2 Thessalonians in terms of eschatology, using a methodological approach and argument very similar to Hughes'. According to Holland's analysis, a thorough rhetorical analysis of 2 Thessalonians reveals that a pseudonymous author living in the post-Pauline era introduces his own eschatological ideas to clarify Paul's eschatological teaching found in 1 Thessalonians. The purpose of 2 Thessalonians is to discredit a group of chaotic apocalyptic enthusiasts with whom the author had a power struggle for influence within the Pauline churches after Paul's death. See Holland, *Tradition that You Received*, 129–30.

and the presentation of various apocalyptic signs that precede it. This has been a major problem in recognizing 2 Thessalonians as written by Paul. How have scholars who believe 2 Thessalonians was written by Paul responded to this claim? They could have responded in one of two ways: either by confirming at the outset whether 1 Thessalonians really presents the parousia as imminent but 2 Thessalonians as delayed, as critical scholars have argued, or by offering alternative explanations for these differences and seeing them as intended by the same author, Paul, rather than attributing them to differences in authorship. As will be briefly seen below, they have argued for the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, with the latter option serving as their main contention.

First, in response to the issue of eschatological ideas and related apocalyptic language in 2 Thessalonians that are said to differ from those in other Pauline letters, proponents of Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians have often referred to their observation that Jesus' teachings on the end times, as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels (e.g., Mark 13:14–37), associate the notion of suddenness or imminent arrival with the concept of signs that precede it. Recognizing that the same kind of paradox is present in the eschatological discourses in the Synoptic Gospels, F. F. Bruce contends that it would not have been impossible for Paul to present different views of the end times between First and Second Thessalonians.[30] Furthermore, some scholars have argued that the same kind of diverse eschatological perspectives can be seen not only in the Synoptic Gospels, but also in contemporary Jewish thought about the end times in general. According to John M. G. Barclay, because apocalyptic writers are known to be elusive characters,

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[30] Bruce, *1 & 2* Thessalonians, xxxviii–xxxix. A similar contention is found in Frame, *Thessalonians*, 43–44; Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 140–41; Best, *Thessalonians*, 55; Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 37.

the circumstances were in the Thessalonian church regarding eschatology. A detailed

review of all proposed opinions is beyond the scope of this discussion. However, if one

examines representative arguments for the change in circumstances, they can be reduced

to a common underlying premise. The common premise running through them is that

because serious eschatological problems deepened within the Thessalonian church, or

because a sufficient understanding of eschatology was not reached even after the first

Thessalonian letter, Paul wrote a second letter to the Thessalonian church. In his seminal

work reconstructing the situations behind the Thessalonian letters using rhetorical and

social scientific methods, Robert Jewett suggests that the Thessalonian believers were

inclined toward the millenarian radicalism that was sweeping Thessalonica at the time, in

which they believed that a new eschatological era had begun, but were surprised to find

that they were still being persecuted.[33] Although Paul attempted to assuage their fears

about the death of their fellow believers with various eschatological teachings in his first

letter to the church, it did not prove effective. In addition, a misinterpretation of 1

Thessalonians strengthened their commitment to millenarianism and made their

persecution even more perplexing.[34] So Paul immediately wrote 2 Thessalonians to

soothe their eschatological fervor and to replace the first letter, which had exacerbated

rather than alleviated their anxieties.[35] While not viewing a radical form of millenarian

movement in Thessalonica as the overarching situation that is believed to have affected

the writing of the Thessalonian correspondence, as Jewett did, many scholars who

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[33] Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 94.
[34] Jewett also views the issue of the idle discussed in 2 Thess 3:6–12 in the light of millenarian radicalism. According to his interpretation, those whom Paul refers to as idle were convinced that they were already experiencing the fullness of the eschatological new age. Consequently, they began to proclaim that the day of the Lord had come, and as a result, along with those they had persuaded, they ceased their work. See Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 176.
[35] Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 191–92.

support Pauline authorship tend to perceive that some degree of eschatological

enthusiasm or confusion in some form must have been present in the church, probably

due to a misunderstanding of Paul's eschatological teachings. They believe that Paul

wrote 2 Thessalonians to address and alleviate this enthusiasm and to correct any

misunderstandings the Thessalonians may have had.[36] Behind most scholars'

understanding of the situation underlying the Thessalonian letters in defending the

Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians is their low estimation of the Thessalonian

believers. For these scholars, the Thessalonians lacked maturity in understanding Paul's

eschatological teachings and even distorted them to become overly enthusiastic about the

end times, resulting in a state of idleness and indolence. Therefore, in explaining the

relationship between First and Second Thessalonians as Paul's writings, these scholars,

along with circumstantial evidence, mainly suggest that either the Thessalonian believers

misunderstood Paul's teachings addressed in 1 Thessalonians, or that Paul's first letter to

them did not meet his initial expectations, thus prompting him to write a second letter.

Perhaps the following statement by Colin R. Nicholl can be taken as representative of

their view of the Thessalonian believers: "All the evidence points once again to an

immature and probably young and predominantly Gentile community having difficulties

processing Jewish eschatological notions."[37]

Scholars who argue for the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians have addressed

the question of historical plausibility raised by critical scholars by offering alternative

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[36] See Lütgert, "Volkommenen im Philipperbrief," 547–654; Blake, "Apocalyptic Setting," 126–39; Wanamaker, "Apocalypticism at Thessalonica," 1–10; Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica*, 62–64; Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 528–29; Barclay, "Thessalonica and Corinth," 49–74; Evans, *Eschatology and Ethics*, 118–37; Lubahn, "Hermeneutischer Ansatz für die Eschatologie," 114–23; Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" 168–69.

[37] Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 186.

explanations. Their answers show that this question is highly subjective and open to interpretation. In other words, their responses implicitly shed light on the problem of the theoretical validity of the question itself by showing that many different possible explanations from different perspectives could be put forward on this issue. For example, in contrast to the Nero myth claim, which has been used as the basis for considering the authorship and dating of 2 Thessalonians as a pseudonymous author in the post-Pauline period, scholars such as Christopher L. Mearns and James R. Harrison see the apocalyptic figure of the antichrist, or the man of lawlessness, as the Roman emperor Caligula, who reigned from 37 to 41 AD, with his attempt to impose living emperor worship in 40 AD as the historical precursor to the destruction of the temple.[38] They therefore argue that the letter was probably written by Paul during his lifetime, not necessarily after his execution in 64 AD and the death of Nero in 68 AD, by a pseudonymous author. It is evident that the question of historical plausibility and the answers given by each scholarly position on Pauline authorship show that the identification of the apocalyptic figures and events figuratively depicted in the text of 2 Thessalonians from a task of historical inference is a challenge to produce objective and unbiased interpretive results.

In addition, scholars who argue for the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians have used rhetorical criticism to examine the text types and rhetorical situations of the two Thessalonian letters as a means of addressing the differences in eschatological perspective between the two letters and the resulting question of authorship. It is worth noting that this is the same method used by scholars who have questioned the Pauline

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[38] Mearns, "Early Eschatological Development," 141–45; Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 71–75. For a detailed critique of the Nero myth claim, arguing for Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, see Klöpper, "zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher," 71–139; Findlay, "Recent Criticism"; Kucicki, *Eschatology*, 39–41.

authorship of 2 Thessalonians. More interestingly, like Hughes, Jewett and Ben Witherington also identify 1 Thessalonians as epideictic rhetoric and 2 Thessalonians as deliberative rhetoric.[39] However, despite using the same rhetorical criticism to address the alleged differences in eschatological viewpoint between the two letters and the ensuing question of authorship, these scholars arrive at different conclusions regarding their context and the identity of their respective authors. While Hughes argues that the deliberative rhetoric of 2 Thessalonians reflects a situation in which a follower of Paul, after his death, opposes a form of realized eschatology taught by rival branches within Pauline circles, Jewett and Witherington suggest that Paul uses deliberative rhetoric in his second letter to the Thessalonian church to correct misunderstandings or false claims about eschatology among the Thessalonian believers.[40]

To summarize the authorship debate of 2 Thessalonians as it relates to eschatology, it is noteworthy that scholars, regardless of their position on Pauline authorship, seem to agree that the two Thessalonian letters contradict each other regarding the timing of the parousia. The primary point of contention is whether these contradictions are due to differences in authorship or differences in circumstances between the writing of the two letters by the same author. In other words, scholars have debated the authorship of 2 Thessalonians while taking for granted Schmidt's claim that 1 Thessalonians presents the parousia as imminent and 2 Thessalonians as delayed. However, there has been little examination of whether these alleged contradictions really exist in the Thessalonian texts, as Schmidt claims. In terms of methodology, scholars

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[39] Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 71–87; Witherington, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 21–36.
[40] Hughes, *Early Christin Rhetoric*, 73–74; Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 82; Witherington, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 35.

have often used similar methods and reasoning to explain the differences in eschatology between the two letters, but have come to opposite conclusions regarding authorship. More importantly, few systematic linguistic studies have been employed to thoroughly examine the grammatical or linguistic forms that construe the meanings of the eschatological accounts of First and Second Thessalonians. Moreover, even fewer studies have analyzed them at the discourse level. Instead, the dominant approach to date has been to analyze and compare the eschatological accounts of the two letters at the level of individual words and phrases, which is not very different from the approach taken by Schmidt in the early nineteenth century.

The Difference in Tone between First and Second Thessalonians

Just as the difference in eschatology between First and Second Thessalonians is an important factor in the argument for doubting the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, the difference in tone between the two letters is also cited by modern critical scholars as an important basis for this argument. Many critical scholars point out the marked contrast in tone between the supposedly warm and intimate 1 Thessalonians and the formal, distant, and impersonal 2 Thessalonians. With this difference in tone being a significant factor, modern critical scholars hold a different view of the authorship and dating of First and Second Thessalonians than the traditional view. They find it unlikely that Paul would have written and sent two successive letters to the same recipients within a short period of time with such a significant difference in tone between them. Regarding authorship, they have concluded that 1 Thessalonians, with its friendly and intimate tone, is indeed an authentic letter written by Paul and addressed to the Thessalonian church. On the other hand, 2 Thessalonians, with its cold and impersonal tone, was probably written by a

pseudonymous author in the post-Pauline era who borrowed Paul's name for some purpose.[41]

On the contrary, scholars who support Pauline authorship dispute that any differences in tone between the two letters are due to circumstantial variations that may have occurred during Paul's writing of the letters, rather than indicating a difference in authorship. Their argumentative pattern in defending the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians is characterized by the fact that they are primarily concerned with proposing alternative explanations for the textual elements that modern critical scholars have pointed to as the basis for the apparent difference in tone between the two letters and the resulting difference in authorship. In doing so, they challenge the idea that the difference in tone is evidence of a difference in authorship, arguing that it can be sufficiently explained by viewing 2 Thessalonians as Paul's writing.

This section will briefly examine the textual details that modern critical scholars use as evidence for a difference in tone between the two Thessalonian letters. It will also explore why these scholars have linked these textual features to the idea that 2

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[41] Should 2 Thessalonians have been written by someone other than Paul under a pseudonym, critical scholars are faced with the task of identifying the actual intended recipients of the letter. In this regard, David G. Meade proposes the concept of double pseudonymity, whereby neither the author nor the original audience of a text can be definitively determined when evidence suggests that a pseudonym was used for 2 Thessalonians. See Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, 127. For a discussion of Meade's notion of double pseudonymity, see Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 228. In attempting to identify the intended recipients of 2 Thessalonians, critical scholars have overwhelmingly maintained that it is a general letter, not addressed to a particular church in a particular place or time. Trilling argues that 2 Thessalonians is a didactic and admonitory letter, not addressed to a particular church, but intended to be read and taught by all church communities in the second generation, which falls between the late first and early second centuries. See Trilling, *Untersuchungen*, 108. On the other hand, Krentz contends that 2 Thessalonians was a general letter written by a pseudonymous author who used Paul's name to invoke his authority during the period of persecution of Christians in the eastern Mediterranean from the late first century onward. See Krentz, "2 Thessalonians," 523. Despite efforts to identify the actual recipients, modern critical scholars have not provided a clear explanation for why the supposedly pseudonymous author explicitly named the Thessalonians as the addressees in the letter known as 2 Thessalonians. This is particularly puzzling given the general or universal nature of the letter's content, as they claim.

Thessalonians was written by a pseudonymous author rather than Paul. It will then

consider the alternative explanations offered by scholars who support the idea that Paul

was the author of 2 Thessalonians, despite the apparent differences in tone between the

two Thessalonian letters.

The idea that the tone of 2 Thessalonians is significantly different from 1

Thessalonians has long been observed. Dating back to the seventeenth century, Hugo

Grotius observed that 2 Thessalonians has an inflammatory tone, filled with offensive

language directed at the antichrist and his hostile actions, which he believed to be

significantly different from the affectionate and sympathetic tone that runs through 1

Thessalonians.[42] During this period, however, Grotius did not consider the differences in

tone between First and Second Thessalonians as a reason to doubt the Pauline authorship

of the latter; he believed that Paul wrote both. Instead, he was interested in using these

characteristics and differences in tone to suggest that 2 Thessalonians was written before

the letter labelled 1 Thessalonians.[43] Nevertheless, Grotius' observations about the

difference in tone between First and Second Thessalonians have been revisited by later

critical scholars and have served as an essential basis for redefining the relationship and

authorship of the two letters.

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[42] Grotius, *Commentatio ad loca quaedam N. Testamenti*, 437. For a more detailed discussion of Grotius's views on the tonal and rhetorical character of 2 Thessalonians, refer to Hughes, "Thessalonians," 568–69; Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" 161.

[43] Grotius, *Commentatio ad loca quaedam N. Testamenti*, 437. For more information about this, see Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*, 39n32; Brookins, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 147; Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" 161. According to Hughes' research, Grotius argues that although Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians before 1 Thessalonians, the former was not published by the early church until after political stability had been established in the region. This is because the descriptions of the antichrist and his deeds in 2 Thessalonians might have placed the author or the intended recipients in some political danger if the letter had been read and circulated at the time it was written. Thus, if we follow Grotius' reasoning, the sequential position of First and Second Thessalonians in the New Testament canon should be understood as a function of their order of publication, not their order of writing. See Hughes, "Thessalonians," 568–69.

Modern critical scholars have identified thanksgiving, personal remarks, appeals to tradition, familial imagery, and commands as major textual elements that reveal the tonal characteristics of First and Second Thessalonians. These scholars have emphasized that there are significant differences in the use of these textual elements between the two Thessalonian letters. They have also argued that these differences provide substantial evidence to support the hypothesis that Paul did not write 2 Thessalonians.[44] Regarding the language of thanksgiving, Maarten J. J. Menken says that the tone of 2 Thessalonians is more formal and distant than that of 1 Thessalonians because the thanksgivings in this letter are different from those in 1 Thessalonians.[45] According to Menken, while the thanksgivings in 1 Thessalonians are direct and unequivocal expressions of gratitude, such as "We thank God" in 1 Thess 1:2 (εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ) and 2:13 (ἡμεῖς εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ), the thanksgiving in 2 Thessalonians is phrased as an obligation to give thanks, such as, "We ought to thank God" as seen in 2 Thess 1:3 (εὐχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν τῷ θεῷ) and 2:13 (ἡμεῖς δὲ ὀφείλομεν εὐχαριστεῖν τῷ θεῷ).[46] Scholars skeptical of the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians have noted that the expressions of thanksgiving in 1 Thessalonians are similar to those commonly found in other Pauline letters. These expressions indicate that the author has a close and positive relationship with the recipients. On the other hand, the thanksgiving in 2 Thessalonians contains a

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[44] The following statement by Victor Paul Furnish summarizes the textual elements that scholars who deny Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians use to argue for a contrast in tone or the author's attitude toward the recipients: "The tone of 2 Thessalonians is impersonal and formal. Unlike 1 Thessalonians, with its many familial images, its expressions of affection, and its patient counsels, this letter has an official, even authoritarian aspect: thanksgiving is presented as an *obligation* (1:3; 2:13); *commands* are issued (3:6–12); what the letter says must be *obeyed* (3:14)." Furnish, *1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians*, 132 (italics original). See also Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 24.

[45] Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 31.

[46] Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 31.

unique phraseology that includes the word ὀφείλομεν, suggesting a barrier to the author's ability to express gratitude to the recipients and indicating a less intimate or distant relationship between them.

Meanwhile, Collins contends that 1 Thessalonians is replete with personal remarks in retrospective language, demonstrating Paul's intent to strengthen his relationship with the Thessalonians by evoking memories of their shared experiences. Moreover, Paul shows his deep trust and affection for the recipients by giving detailed accounts of his personal circumstances. On the other hand, 2 Thessalonians is not without a degree of retrospection and personal remarks, but they are much less pronounced and less extensive than those in 1 Thessalonians. In contrast to 1 Thessalonians, where personal experiences and past relationships with the recipients are emphasized, the author of 2 Thessalonians prioritizes appeals to tradition and Paul's authority to instruct and admonish the recipients. The author is primarily concerned with recalling the Pauline traditions of eschatological teaching and ethical precepts, rather than maintaining and strengthening interpersonal relationships with the addressees.[47] Especially when it comes to the use of tradition, scholars such as Caroline Vander Stichele, Franz Laub, and Aarde agree that 2 Thessalonians is not consistent with Paul's other writings. This is due to its emphasis on apostolic tradition and authority, as seen in 2 Thess 2:15 and 3:6, which are more in line with the concerns of the early church after Paul's time than with Paul's own views. Thus, they suggest that the letter may have been written by one of Paul's disciples who wrote after his death, rather than by Paul himself.[48]

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[47] Collins, "'Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ,'" 426–28. See also Weima and Porter, *Annotated Bibliography*, 52 for a discussion of this argument by Collins.

[48] Vander Stichele, "Concept of Tradition," 499–504; Laub, "Paulinische Autorität," 403–17; Aarde, "Struggle against Heresy," 418–25. Assuming that 2 Thessalonians was written by a forger using

Another textual element often cited to shed light on the contrast in tone between First and Second Thessalonians is the use of familial imagery and language in the letters. Modern critical scholars have noted that 1 Thessalonians is rich in family-related language and metaphors that contribute to a sense of warmth, intimacy, and emotional connection between Paul and the Thessalonian church community. On the other hand, 2 Thessalonians seems to take a more restrained approach in terms of familial imagery and language, which may indicate a shift in the author's attitude toward the recipients or their relationship compared to the first letter.[49] Apart from the occurrences of "brothers and sisters" (ἀδελφοί) used as a form of direct address in both letters as a formulaic epistolary device, the prevalence of familial terms such as "infants" (1 Thess 2:7), "nursing mother" (2:7), "father" (2:11), "children" (2:11), and "orphans" (2:17) in 1 Thessalonians underscores the loving and supportive relationship between the author and the recipients. In contrast, the diminished presence of such language in 2 Thessalonians, outweighed by a more significant number of commands (2 Thess 3:4, 6, 10, 12) and doctrinal instructions (1:8; 2:5, 12; 3:14), has led critical scholars to conclude that the tone of the second letter is more authoritative and directive, as opposed to the warm, familial tone found in the first letter.[50]

Paul's name, Stephen J. Friesen argues that the letter represents a point in time when there was a major shift in the role of Christian letters in general. From being mere means of communication, as in 1 Thessalonians, Christian letters to the church in the time of 2 Thessalonians became repositories of authoritative statements of divine truth. The forger accomplished this by preserving Paul's oral traditions in written form, thus creating what is now known as 2 Thessalonians. See Friesen, "Second Thessalonians," 207.

[49] See Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" 137–38; Collins, "Second Epistle," 222; Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 23–24.

[50] See Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 24. Richard argues that the difference in tone between First and Second Thessalonians is explicitly evident in the choice of verbs used in the exhortative and hortatory sections of each letter. Specifically, while 1 Thessalonians begins the exhortations with softer and gentler verbs such as "we appeal" (ἐρωτῶμεν) and "we encourage" (παρακαλοῦμεν), as in 1 Thess 4:1 and 5:14, 2 Thessalonians begins with the stronger verb "we command" (παραγγέλλομεν) in 2 Thess 3:6,

In light of the arguments of modern critical scholars discussed so far, the question of why the difference in tone between the two Thessalonian letters must lead to a difference in authorship can be answered as follows. First, for those who deny Pauline authorship, the expressions of thanksgiving in 2 Thessalonians, with their seemingly distant and somewhat ambiguous nuances compared to those in 1 Thessalonians, are unique to that letter and not found in any other Pauline letter, making it difficult to attribute them to Paul. Second, they suggest that reminding readers of the apostolic tradition handed down to them in 2 Thessalonians and urging them to keep it is more consistent with the context of the early church in the post-Pauline era than with Paul's own request to his readers. Third, modern critical scholars approach the question of the tonal characteristics of the two letters by assuming that it is unlikely, on a common-sense level, that the same author would have written and delivered two consecutive letters with such a stark difference in tone to the same recipients within a short period of time. From a methodological perspective, the argumentation patterns of modern critical scholars show that most studies have approached the question of tone through a comparative approach, historical inference, or by appealing to common-sense intuition. However, very few studies have used linguistic theories that can effectively define and address the author's tone and attitude as represented in a written text.

When it comes to the question of tone, even scholars who defend the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians largely agree with modern critical scholars that there is a significant difference in tone between First and Second Thessalonians. However, unlike critical scholars who attribute the differences in tone to differences in authorship, they

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indicating a more authoritative or commanding tone than 1 Thessalonians.

suggest that the difference in tone between the two letters may reflect a change in Paul's relationship with the Thessalonian recipients or a shift in his attitude toward them. In this regard, Jewett, who defends the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, remarks, "Yet the tone of 2 Thessalonians is substantially different from that of 1 Thessalonians, implying a more irritable relation between writer and audience."[51] Abraham J. Malherbe also notes that the tone of the two letters varies according to their intended use, with each letter inevitably having its own unique tonal qualities.[52] In support of this argument, they point to several problematic factors that must have arisen within the Thessalonian church, including the increased persecution of believers, misunderstandings of eschatology, the spread of false teachings about it, and issues related to idleness among members, which are believed to have played a crucial role in shaping the context and tone of the second letter. In their view, Paul's response to these new circumstances explains the differences in tone between the two letters. By emphasizing these factors, Pauline authorship advocates seek to provide a fuller understanding of the historical context and purpose of the two Thessalonian letters.

As a typical explanation for the difference in tone between First and Second Thessalonians from a Pauline authorship perspective, Jeffrey A. D. Weima emphasizes Paul's adaptability in his writing. Weima argues that Paul was always willing and ready

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[51] Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 17.

[52] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 376. In what may be the most recent discussion of the issue of tonal differences, Gupta, in his work published in 2019, argues that a variety of factors can contribute to the change in tone, apart from simply different authors. In his 2021 commentary on Thessalonians, Brookins notes that differences in tone between the two letters are not only possible, but likely, due to differences in circumstances. This is because not every situation warrants the same tone or elicits the same emotional response. Thus, differences in situations present a rhetorical probability for variations in tone between the letters. See Gupta, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 207; Brookins, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 140. From the statements of these two recent scholars, we can see that the pattern of argument observed in the early scholars defending Pauline authorship has continued to this day without much development or challenge.

to modify his tone to fit the specific circumstantial context of the issues he was addressing. In the case of the Thessalonian church, Paul faced a situation where a false prophecy had misled some members regarding the day of the Lord (2 Thess 2:1–17), and the problem of rebellious idlers in the church had worsened (3:6–15). Weima concludes that it was appropriate for Paul to adopt a firmer and more serious tone in his second letter to the Thessalonians.[53] As mentioned earlier in the discussion of the authorship debate over eschatology, Jewett suggests that radical millenarianism was an overarching theological and ethical problem for the Thessalonian church and was the reason for the writing of 2 Thessalonians. According to Jewett, this millenarian movement caused the Thessalonian church to be challenged by a group of libertine and enthusiastic members, and in addition, the church was subjected to ongoing persecution.[54] Jewett believes that these problems stemmed from the Thessalonian believers' misunderstanding of Paul's earlier eschatological teachings in 1 Thessalonians. Taking these points into account, Jewett suggests that the situation of Paul and his Thessalonian audience had deteriorated, possibly because of the Thessalonians' excessive enthusiasm and indulgence and their failure to heed Paul's teachings. Consequently, this may have been the reason why Paul wrote the second letter with a more cold and severe tone, especially if the Thessalonians continued to misunderstand his remarks on eschatology.[55]

At the same time, however, defenders of Pauline authorship argue that the difference in tone is not as great as has been claimed. Because of this, their arguments about tone can sometimes seem ambiguous and inconsistent when addressing this issue.

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[53] Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*, 49.
[54] Jewett, "Enthusiastic Radicalism," 181.
[55] Jewett, "Enthusiastic Radicalism," 231.

For example, as seen above, Weima sees the apparent discrepancy in tone between First and Second Thessalonians as Paul's effort to modify his tone in response to the changed circumstances between the writing of the two letters. But at the same time, he points out that the argument using tone differences to question the authorship of 2 Thessalonians not only overemphasizes the contrast in tone with the first letter, but also fails to acknowledge the presence of a warm and affectionate tone in the second letter.[56] Other proponents, such as I. Howard Marshall, Paul Foster, and Nicholl, have also noted that the tone of 2 Thessalonians is warm and affectionate. At the same time, however, they acknowledge that the letter's emphasis on the problem of idleness and the Thessalonian church's misunderstandings of eschatology probably prompted Paul to adopt a more forceful and demanding tone in his second letter.[57] These patterns observed in how they approach the issue of the alleged discrepancy in tone between First and Second Thessalonians suggest some inconsistency in their arguments. If it is believed that Paul truly intended to offer warm encouragement and support to the Thessalonian church, it seems contradictory to also argue that his tone was at the same time cold and impersonal. Alternatively, one might suggest that the text of 2 Thessalonians contains a mixture of different tones. However, no comprehensive and unified explanation has been provided to explain this. The presence of such inconsistencies in their arguments makes it difficult to reach a clear and coherent conclusion about the tonal characteristics of the two letters.[58] As a result, it may be difficult to accept that they have presented a reasoned and

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[56] Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*, 48–49.

[57] Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 34; Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?"157; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 211–12.

[58] The only somewhat coherent arguments about tone can be found in a rhetorical analysis of the Thessalonian letters, which examines the tone of the letters according to their literary types based on rhetorical elements and structures. For example, Witherington focuses on the rhetorical dimensions of 2 Thessalonians and considers it to be deliberative rhetoric, which leads him to conclude that the impersonal,

consistent argument in the authorship debate, which centers on the alleged difference in tone.

Throughout this discussion, we can see that most scholars, whether denying or defending Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, have addressed the authorship issue by acknowledging a distinct difference in tone between the two Thessalonian letters. To date, however, little serious work has been done to verify whether the alleged difference in tone between the two letters actually exists. Instead, discussions of their relationship and authorship have largely operated on the assumption of such a disparity. Furthermore, it is particularly noteworthy that neither position on the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians has provided a comprehensive explanation of the tone of the letters. This is mainly due to the lack of a suitable analytical tool that can accurately measure the degree of tone and attitude expressed in the texts. In other words, almost no one has attempted to define the concept of tone and provide a theoretical framework to explain how it manifests in the written text. Rather, most have focused on individual vocabulary, phrases, or literary devices in isolation (e.g., "we give thanks," "we ought to give thanks"; "we appeal," "we command"; and family metaphors and traditions) as if they self-evidently embody a defined tone or attitude of the author toward his addressees. In spite of the fact that the only source from which modern readers can identify Paul's tone and the attitudes resulting from it is the language of his texts written in the Greek of the Hellenistic period, the field of research on the Thessalonian letters has not taken into account its complex linguistic system, which correlates the author's communicative

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official, and authoritative tone of the text is primarily based on this factor. See Witherington, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 29. However, the use of rhetorical criticism to interpret Paul's letters is methodologically highly questionable and unconvincing. It can be seen as a kind of circular fallacy to determine the tone of a text by imposing a presumed literary or rhetorical type on the text itself.

purpose to convey his certain attitudes towards the addressees with the grammatical forms of choice that encode such characteristics. In light of this assessment, it is obvious that there is a need for a linguistic method that can effectively identify and analyze the tonal and attitudinal features of the Thessalonian letters. By using such a method, we can arrive at a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the author's tone and attitude toward his addressees, which can shed new light on the ongoing debate about the authorship of the Thessalonian letters.

The Literary Similarity between First and Second Thessalonians

As noted above, the perceived differences between First and Second Thessalonians in terms of eschatology and tone have been the source of ongoing debates about their authorship within the field of Thessalonian studies. Such differences between the two letters have led critical scholars to question the credibility of the letters, focusing primarily on the authorship of 2 Thessalonians. These discrepancies not only affect the way each text is interpreted, but also raise doubts as to whether they were written by a single author from a coherent theological and pastoral point of view. In addition to the contrasting eschatological viewpoints and tone, the claimed presence of significant literary similarities between First and Second Thessalonians, including shared structures, phrases, and themes, has increased skepticism about the Pauline authorship of the latter letter. While it is not impossible that the two letters share certain similarities, such as the use of typical Pauline expressions and motifs, these similarities could also suggest that the second letter drew inspiration from or relied on the first as a reference, especially if the degree of similarity between them is significant. This possibility might be relevant if the canonical order of First and Second Thessalonians in the New Testament reflects their

chronological order of writing. Adopting the latter option as the basis of their argument, modern critical scholars claim that the factors exposing the characteristics of 2 Thessalonians' literary dependence on 1 Thessalonians conclusively prove that 2 Thessalonians is not a genuine and original Pauline work. Based on this hypothesis, they propose that a pseudonymous author of 2 Thessalonians attempted to mimic the language of Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians while conveying his own theological perspectives under the guise of Pauline authority.

It was William Wrede who, in his influential 1903 work, made a groundbreaking argument against the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, with a keen interest in the close literary and linguistic relationship between First and Second Thessalonians. Wrede's attention to the textual elements that potentially demonstrate a parallel relationship between the two Thessalonian letters arguably paved the way for subsequent arguments against the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians to be supported on a more objective and formal level.[59] After closely examining the parallel elements between First

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[59] Wrede, *Authenticity*, 4–34. Prior to the publication of Wrede's work in 1903, some scholars had noted possible literary similarities between First and Second Thessalonians, but they had not explored their observations as thoroughly as Wrede did. Wrede's examination of their literary relationship is particularly noteworthy because, unlike his predecessors who merely hinted at the possibility of such a close literary relationship between the two letters, he developed the idea into an argument for the imitation of 1 Thessalonians in 2 Thessalonians by providing a more comprehensive analysis of the textual elements that allegedly indicate such characteristics. Consequently, Wrede's observations and textual evidence offer a more detailed and elaborate perspective, making his case for literary resemblance as strong evidence for the copying of 2 Thessalonians from 1 Thessalonians by a pseudonymous author. For earlier scholars who saw such close literary similarities between First and Second Thessalonians, see Kern, "Über 2. Thess 2,1–12," 145–214; Bornemann, *Thessalonicherbriefe*, 460–63; Holtzmann, "Thessalonicher Brief," 97–108. Meanwhile, in his article published in 1908, Stephan Gruner noted that the argument for the literary dependence of 2 Thessalonians on 1 Thessalonians goes back to Baur and has been forcefully explained by Wrede. See Gruner, "Besteht zwischen den 2. und 1. Briefe," 419–64. Among these early scholars, Kern denied Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, while Wilhelm Bornemann and Heinrich Julius Holtzmann supported the idea of Pauline authorship. In considering these early scholars' comments on the literary relationship between First and Second Thessalonians, as well as their differing views on Pauline authorship, it is clear that the existence of literary similarities between the two letters was universally recognized among scholars from the beginning of this issue, regardless of their stance on the question of Pauline authorship for 2 Thessalonians.

and Second Thessalonians, Wrede suggested that the second letter resulted from literary

dependence on the first. Based on such striking similarities in structure, vocabulary, and

themes between the two letters, he argued that 2 Thessalonians was likely written by a

later author who sought to mimic while expanding upon the teachings found in 1

Thessalonians, which he believed was written by Paul.[60]

In his work, Wrede provides parallel columns to help compare First and Second

Thessalonians side by side. This method of presentation may allow readers to identify

quickly similar themes and identical textual elements used between the two texts,

ultimately providing a stronger case for the argument of literary dependence. Space does

not permit an exhaustive analysis of all the parallel textual elements identified by Wrede;

nevertheless, it is valuable to mention a few notable examples, even if only briefly

discussed. The most notable parallels between First and Second Thessalonians that

Wrede claims to have identified are 1 Thess 1:2–10 in 2 Thess 1:3–12, 1 Thess 2:12–13

in 2 Thess 2:13–14, and 1 Thess 4:10–12 and 5:14 in 2 Thess 3:6–15. The first parallel

concerns the extensive and detailed opening thanksgivings in both letters. Their

expressions of gratitude are similar in content, structure, and phrasing, according to

Wrede. Even more remarkable, these thanksgivings can be considered exclusive features

found only in the two Thessalonian letters, since they are longer and more complex than

those found in other letters attributed to Paul, thus making them unique.[61] The second

parallel concerns the presence of an additional thanksgiving in the body of the letter,

which reappears after the initial thanksgiving in the opening section of the letter. Both

First and Second Thessalonians share the characteristic of including a second

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[60] Wrede, *Authenticity*, 79.
[61] Wrede, *Authenticity*, 6–7.

thanksgiving in the body of the letter. As with the first parallel, this unique epistolary

element appears only in First and Second Thessalonians and is not found in any of the

other letters attributed to Paul.[62] The third set of parallel texts identified by Wrede

consists of exhortations against idleness. Specifically, the warning against idleness in 2

Thess 3:6–15 echoes that of 1 Thess 4:10–12 and 5:14.[63] In addition to these major

parallel elements reportedly present in both First and Second Thessalonians, Wrede

identifies several textual elements in the letters that show similarities on various levels,

including vocabulary, phrases, structures, themes, and motifs. Perhaps, especially, the

fact that the two Thessalonian letters share a deep interest in the end-time events

surrounding the parousia would make the parallel relationship between the two letters

even more pronounced.[64]

Based on these parallel textual elements and related themes, Wrede speculated

that a later author of 2 Thessalonians may have written his letter with significant

dependence on the writing styles and themes presented in 1 Thessalonians. Wrede's

reasoning in recognizing that the literary similarities between the two Thessalonian letters

are due to differences in authorship rather than being intended by a single author, Paul, is

consistent with that of modern critical scholars who address the issues of differences in

eschatology and tone. As discussed earlier, for most modern critical scholars, the

differences in eschatological perspective and tone between the two Thessalonian letters

are so significant that it is difficult, on a common-sense level, to accept the possibility

that a single author could have written and delivered such letters sequentially to the same

[62] Wrede, *Authenticity*, 19.
[63] Wrede, *Authenticity*, 17.
[64] Wrede, *Authenticity*, 16.

recipients within a short period of time. Likewise, Wrede finds it difficult to accept the

likelihood that the same author would have written and sent two successive letters with

similar wording and themes within a short period of time without substantial changes.[65] It

should be noted, however, that for Wrede these similarities between the two letters do not

necessarily call for 2 Thessalonians to be considered a complete copy of 1 Thessalonians.

He acknowledges that there are also areas where they diverge. The divergence in the

parallels between First and Second Thessalonians is evident in 2 Thess 2:1–12, which

contains highly controversial material on eschatology.[66] Like many critical scholars,

Wrede recognizes a contradiction between the two letters regarding the eschatological

viewpoints on the timing of the parousia and the end times, that is, while the two letters

address similar eschatological themes in similar language, they diverge in their essential

perspectives.[67] In this sense, Wrede argues that 2 Thessalonians was written by a later

author whose purpose was to imitate while modifying or expanding the teachings of 1

Thessalonians.[68] In light of Wrede's arguments, the pseudonymous author could be seen

as appealing to Paul's authority by imitating the language and style of his first letter to

the Thessalonians. At the same time, however, the author conveys his own theological

beliefs by modifying or expanding upon the teachings of the original Pauline letter.[69]

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[65] Wrede, *Authenticity*, 27–28. For further discussion of Wrede's inference regarding the correlation between the literary similarity and authorship, refer to Hughes, "Thessalonians," 570.

[66] Wrede, *Authenticity*, 32.

[67] According to Wrede, "The complete section 2 Thess 2:1–12 presents something new in contrast to the same section of the first letter" (*Authenticity*, 19). The same section of the first letter to which Wrede refers is 1 Thess 4:13–5:11, which discusses eschatological events centred on the parousia, similar in theme to the passage in 2 Thessalonians.

[68] Wrede, *Authenticity*, 42–43, 77.

[69] Furnish's following statement illustrates such a notion of congruence in wording but incongruence in thought, as represented by how 2 Thessalonians uses 1 Thessalonians: "The most important literary argument is that this letter appears, in certain respects, to have been written in imitation of 1 Thessalonians. The structural similarities and numerous instances of correspondence in wording . . . are best explained if a later author has used the earlier Pauline letter as a model. This would also account for the fact that correspondence in wording is not always matched by correspondence in thought" (*1*

Ever since Wrede presented his literary similarity argument, it has been regarded as crucial evidence supporting the idea that 2 Thessalonians was not written by Paul, but by a pseudonymous author. His argument was further scrutinized and strengthened, notably by Trilling, and is still supported by many critical scholars today.[70] On the other hand, it is worth noting that Wrede's textual parallels and reasoning have been consistently adopted by later critical scholars since he first presented them, without significant modification, elaboration, or noticeable methodological development over time. Whether due to the rigour and thoroughness of his methodology, or to the textual evidence he presented so comprehensively that no other supplementary material was needed, the majority of later critical scholars have repeatedly followed and echoed Wrede's theories and arguments, with little refinement or expansion, in advancing their view of 2 Thessalonians as a pseudonymous Pauline letter.[71] Even in their reasoning for

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Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 132).

[70] See Trilling, *Untersuchungen*, 67–108; Laub, *Eschatologische Verkündigung*, 96–110; Krodel, "2 Thessalonians," 77–80; Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" 132–36; Marxsen, *Thessalonicherbrief*, 18–28; Collins, "Second Epistle," 218–21; Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 36–40; Verhoef, "Relation between 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians," 163–71; Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 20–22; Boring, *I & II Thessalonians*, 210–14.

[71] This scholarly tendency becomes clear when we examine some of the statements made by recent modern critical scholars in support of the pseudonymous authorship of 2 Thessalonians from the perspective of literary dependence. In his commentary on the Thessalonian correspondence published in 1995, Richard states, "Several features of 2 Thessalonians are striking even to the cursory reader. The letter, unlike other Pauline letters, has two thanksgivings as does 1 Thessalonians. Its epistolary opening is nearly verbatim in agreement with that of its model, a situation which occurs nowhere else in Paul, not even in the two Corinthian letter openings. Likewise, there are parallel, double prayers and conclusions" (*First and Second Thessalonians*, 20). In his 2009 essay, Krentz extensively lists the textual parallels between First and Second Thessalonians identified by Wrede, almost verbatim, in support of the non-Pauline authenticity of 2 Thessalonians. He then concludes by saying, "Wrede's argument still stands. It has been reinforced by subsequent detailed investigations and has not been overturned. It remains a compelling argument for the non-Pauline origin of 2 Thessalonians" ("Stone That Will Not Fit," 464). On the common themes that 2 Thessalonians shares with 1 Thessalonians, M. Eugene Boring notes in his 2015 commentary, "Second Thessalonians introduces no new topics or themes but is entirely devoted to three themes taken from 1 Thessalonians: persecution, eschatology, and the disorderly" (*I & II Thessalonians*, 211). An examination of the statements and examples offered by these recent critical scholars regarding the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians in light of its literary connection with 1 Thessalonians reveals that they have not approached the related literary or linguistic elements with any new or more advanced theories or methodologies. Instead, they have repeated almost verbatim arguments made by Wrede over a hundred years ago.

linking the literary similarities between First and Second Thessalonians to the idea of a difference in authorship, later modern critical scholars still reiterate what Wrede had already suggested in the early twentieth century. Representative of this is the following statement by John A. Bailey, which shows that despite the considerable time that has elapsed since Wrede, later scholars still rely on the same reasoning that Wrede laid out as an underlying theoretical premise for establishing why the similarities between the letters justify the argument for different authorship: "It is impossible to conceive of a man as creative as Paul drawing upon his own previous letter in such an unimaginative way."[72]

From the discussion so far, it can be said that Wrede's argument for literary similarity consists of two main strands. One is the parallel textual elements he identified between First and Second Thessalonians. The other is his reasoning, based on basic experiential knowledge and intuitive understanding, that the similarities between the two letters are so great that it is highly unlikely that Paul would have sent another letter to the Thessalonian believers within a short time that was almost identical to his first letter. Scholars defending the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians have also advanced their arguments by addressing Wrede's claims of literary similarity. In responding to Wrede's argument, rather than directly engaging the textual parallels he presented or addressing the related textual elements using other analytical tools, they have focused primarily on offering alternative explanations for his reasoning that the similarities between the two letters necessarily indicate differences in authorship. In other words, while acknowledging the striking literary, linguistic, and thematic similarities between First and Second Thessalonians, as claimed by Wrede, they have developed their argument for the

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[72] Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" 136.

Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians on the premise that these literary similarities do not necessarily indicate differences in authorship.

In his 2004 work, Nicholl summarizes various explanations that have been proposed for the literary similarities between First and Second Thessalonians, which are recognized due to the textual parallels found in them. These explanations include: (1) 1 Thessalonians is an authentic Pauline letter, while 2 Thessalonians is a pseudonymous letter using Paul's name; (2) Paul kept a copy of 1 Thessalonians, which served as the basis for 2 Thessalonians; (3) the time gap between the two letters was so minimal that 1 Thessalonians was still fresh in Paul's mind when he composed 2 Thessalonians; (4) Paul had developed specific thoughts and feelings about his converts that remained unchanged from 1 Thessalonians to 2 Thessalonians; (5) Paul used stock words and phrases in both letters; (6) 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians were written in close proximity and addressed to different segments of the same church community, such as 1 Thessalonians to Gentile believers and 2 Thessalonians to Jewish believers, or 1 Thessalonians to a select group within the church and 2 Thessalonians to all church members; (7) the circumstances addressed in the letters were similar.[73] With the exception of the first explanation, which is commonly proposed by critical scholars who consider 2 Thessalonians to be pseudonymous, the others are all alternative explanations offered by those who defend the Pauline authorship of the letter. What can be inferred from these proposed explanations is that in discussing the issue of literary similarity between the two letters, most proponents of Pauline authorship have been concerned with presenting

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[73] Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 4–5. In listing a summary of the explanations that have been proposed so far for the literary similarities between the two letters, Nicholl footnotes each one with useful information about the scholars who have proposed it and their work.

possible scenarios that they hope will help make sense of situations in which similar correspondence could have been written by the same author and sent to the same recipients within a relatively short period of time. In short, rather than re-examining the textual elements in question using other methodologically sophisticated analytical tools, they have primarily approached the authorship issue raised by the literary similarity argument by considering contextual factors outside the text. This process mainly involves reconstructing relevant situations, reasoning with psychological or cognitive factors, or making inferences based on plausibility. This does not seem fundamentally different from the way Wrede and his followers reasoned.

Of course, this is not to say that there were not Pauline authorship advocates who directly addressed and commented on the alleged parallel textual elements. In response to Wrede's assertion that there are significant parallels between First and Second Thessalonians, Malherbe notes, "There are similarities between the two letters, but they are not as great as is frequently thought, and they differ in importance."[74] Foster also remarks, "The supposed synoptic parallels between the two letters do not reveal direct literary dependence, especially once the fairly standardized opening and final greeting are removed from consideration."[75] However, it is questionable whether their conclusions are derived from a detailed examination of the textual elements that led to the perception of similarity between the letters. An example of this tendency can be found in the way Malherbe argues when he addresses the claim of literary similarity. As noted above, Malherbe concluded that the alleged parallels between the two letters have little in common in terms of wording. In reaching this conclusion, however, he considered only

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[74] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 357.
[75] Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" 170.

four sets of parallel verses in isolation (1 Thess 2:13 and 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Thess 3:11 and

2 Thess 3:5; 1 Thess 4:1 and 2 Thess 3:1; 1 Thess 5:23 and 2 Thess 3:16).[76] He did not go

through all the details of other passages that have been raised elsewhere, nor did he

consider other different textual levels beyond the words in the verses.

In sum, most advocates of Pauline authorship have primarily focused on drawing

inferences from extratextual factors but have devoted less attention to examining

linguistic elements present in the texts when addressing the authorship question raised by

the literary similarity argument. In particular, the fact that various scenarios have been

presented as plausible explanations might suggest that the issue of literary similarity has

not been approached from a methodological standpoint that emphasizes greater

objectivity and rigour. It should be noted, however, that the explanations offered by

scholars in favour of Pauline authorship are by no means to be dismissed or considered

insignificant. They may be important factors that are well worth considering when

interpreting the texts from an extratextual perspective. What is pointed out here is merely

a trend in scholarship on the Thessalonian authorship debate, where relatively little

attention has been paid to analysis at the intratextual level, even though the nature of the

literary similarity argument necessitates serious discussion of linguistic elements within

the texts.

Furthermore, as a theoretical and methodological consideration, both for scholars who

defend Pauline authorship and for those who deny it, before addressing the question of

the authorship of 2 Thessalonians on the assumption that there are significant similarities

between the Thessalonian letters in structure, language, and theme, it would be

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[76] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 357.

worthwhile to make an effort to reexamine and reaffirm that there are indeed such similarities between the two letters. It would also be helpful to consider an appropriate theoretical framework that helps to define what constitutes linguistic similarities and differences between the texts, based on a more comprehensive understanding of textual properties. More concretely, this theory would make it possible to recognize the organizational relationships between information units that form a text as a coherent semantic unit, the unique structural patterns of a given text, as determined by thematization patterns functioning at different levels of the text, the formal and semantic hierarchical relations that can be identified by the degree of prominence between the linguistic elements used in the text, and the grammatical and linguistic devices that facilitate these textual properties. In addition, when discussing the authorship question of 2 Thessalonians in the context of the literary similarity argument, it would be crucial to use a methodological tool that provides relevant analytical resources for identifying such textual properties in a robust manner. This tool should be capable of analyzing different textual levels, from individual words and phrases to the whole discourse. Consequently, the analytical results regarding the textual properties of the text, derived from these theoretical and methodological considerations, can help reveal the text's inherent textuality and provide a foundation for a more comprehensive and objective discussion of the so-called literary characteristics. When it comes to the two Thessalonian letters, examining these texts based on such a theoretical framework and methodological procedure would allow for a more accurate identification of the textual properties of each and a fuller and more comprehensive comparison between the two. By using this linguistically oriented methodology to establish a clearer literary relationship between

First and Second Thessalonians, it is hoped that the authorship issue can be addressed in a more informed manner.

The Emphatic Authenticating Comment of 2 Thess 3:17

The last major argument commonly used by modern critical scholars to establish the non-Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians concerns the so-called self-authenticating comment found in 2 Thess 3:17. In this verse, the author seems to include a final greeting in his own hand as a verification mark, which distinguishes his letter and emphasizes Paul's authorship. The mere presence of a personal greeting or concluding remark written in the author's own hand, however, is not an issue in the ongoing debate over the authorship of 2 Thessalonians. This is because other letters attributed to Paul as genuine also contain some form of closing note, often accompanied by a statement indicating that it is written in the author's own hand (e.g., 1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; Phlm 19). This is also true of the letter whose authorship is disputed (e.g., Col 4:18). According to Foster's discussion of this matter, the problem with the final greeting in 2 Thess 3:17 arises from the fact that, while the other three instances simply draw attention to the final remark from the author's hand, with the instance in Phlm 19 acting like a guarantee of repayment of a debt, perhaps as a rhetorical strategy, the closing salutation with author's signature in 2 Thess 3:17 places more emphasis on the declaration as evidence of Paul's authorship of this letter.[77] Furthermore, as Porter notes, the absence of such a signature in 1 Thessalonians, in contrast to its presence in 2 Thessalonians, has given modern critical scholars a reason to question the authenticity of the latter.[78] As discussed earlier

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[77] Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" 158.
[78] Porter, *Apostle Paul*, 230.

regarding the authorship question of 2 Thessalonians in relation to eschatology, it is

frequently argued by those who deny Pauline authorship that since 2 Thessalonians

presents a unique eschatological viewpoint not found in other Pauline letters, including 1

Thessalonians, the letter must not have been written by Paul but by a later pseudonymous

author. Using a similar line of reasoning, modern critical scholars argue that the Pauline

signature in 2 Thess 3:17 must have been added by a later pseudonymous author. Again,

this is because other Pauline letters do not contain such a final greeting accompanied by

an authorial signature that serves as a verifying mark of Pauline authorship, and unlike 2

Thessalonians, 1 Thessalonians does not feature an author's handwritten signature at the

end of the letter.[79] In the view of modern critical scholars who question the Pauline

authorship of 2 Thessalonians, the handwritten signature attached to the final greeting in

2 Thess 3:17 is itself suspect as a pseudonymous character, the main reason being that

only here does it function as an authenticating mark.[80] To some, this may seem a rather

intuitive and unsophisticated approach. Nevertheless, for these critical scholars, such

method of inference in which, among texts supposedly ascribed to the same author, if a

certain characteristic is found exclusively in one text but not in others, then there is

probably a difference in authorship between them, is considered the most fundamental

basis for casting doubt on the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, especially in

relation to the purported self-authenticating comment in 2 Thess 3:17. Drawing on these

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[79] For critical scholars who hold this view, see Hollmann, "Unechtheit," 38; Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" 138; Trilling, *zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher*, 158; Krodel, "2 Thessalonians," 84–86; Collins, "Second Epistle," 223–24; Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 33–36; Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 394–95; Furnish, *1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians*, 132–33.

[80] In this regard, Philip F. Esler remarks, "[t]he self-conscious (and unique) way in which the author draws attention to the practice in 3:17 by saying that 'This is my mark' (*sēmeion*, sign) is itself suspicious" ("2 Thessalonians," 1219). And Richard says, "[2 Thess] 3:17 is ponderous in its insistence on authenticity . . . Only in the Paulinist letter, however, does one find an explicit note that the handwriting serves as an authenticating mark" (*First and Second Thessalonians*, 394).

observations and methodological reasoning, modern critical scholars have provided additional supporting arguments as to why the elements that seem to emphasize Pauline authorship in the final greeting of 2 Thess 3:17 should be considered as coming from a later pseudonymous author. These include questions around historical plausibility and the deceptive traits betrayed in the authenticating comment at issue in 2 Thess 3:17.

Regarding the argument centred on the problems of historical plausibility, modern critical scholars often pay attention to the author's mention of his handwritten signature as a sign to affirm the genuineness and distinguish it from others he did not write, which is the way he writes in all his letters. Attentive to the author's reference to "in every letter (ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ)" in 2 Thess 3:17, Trilling suggests that this indicates a later author's familiarity with an entire Pauline corpus, accessible to him after its completion beyond Paul's time.[81] Similarly, Boring notes that the author's remark that Paul, the indicated author in this letter, personally signs every letter suggests a historical setting in which a complete collection of Pauline letters exists after the time of the apostle.[82] In other words, for modern critical scholars, if it is believed that Paul was the author of 2 Thessalonians, then there may be a problem of historical plausibility with "every letter" that 2 Thessalonians refers to as being signed by Paul, because his first letter to the Thessalonians does not contain such an authorial signature. If the Thessalonians received and read this second letter not long after Paul's first letter, the comment that Paul signed it with his own handwriting and that he wrote this letter because he did so in every letter would have seemed incomprehensible or even absurd. This is because the first letter they received from Paul had no such autograph. Thus, proponents of the pseudonymity of 2

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[81] Trilling, *zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher*, 104–5.
[82] Boring, *I & II Thessalonians*, 308.

Thessalonians suggest that "every letter" in 2 Thess 3:17 presumably refers to letters written by Paul other than the first letter to the Thessalonians, in which his final words are delivered with his handwritten signature. If so, the question may arise as to which letters a later pseudonymous author had in mind when he referred to every letter bearing Paul's autograph in 2 Thess 3:17, since not all extant Pauline letters bear such marks. As part of a response, Charles H. Giblin contends that the later author must have referred to 1 Thessalonians in general when writing his letter labelled 2 Thessalonians, and to 1 Corinthians, Galatians, and Philemon specifically, which contain Paul's signature, when composing the closing salutation in 2 Thess 3:17.[83] Another reason why modern critical scholars attribute the authenticating comment in 2 Thess 3:17 to a later pseudonymous author rather than to Paul is the perceived exaggeration in the claim of authorship. Martin Rist calls this authenticating comment in question "pseudonymous tells," claiming that it provides a clue to a situation in which the supposedly pseudonymous author seems to be overcompensating or trying too hard to look genuinely Pauline, and thus, the reader might find evidence here that the document is a pseudepigraphic forgery.[84] Other critical scholars, such as Margaret M. Mitchell and Bart D. Ehrman, also view the reference to a Pauline signature in the letter as an overly aggressive defence of its authenticity, suggesting that the pseudonymous author may have added it to establish credibility.[85] Taken together, these two arguments advanced by modern critical scholars suggest that 2

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[83] Giblin, "2 Thessalonians," 460–61. If this is the case, one might wonder why the author would specify the phrase "every letter" here. Giblin does not explain this further. However, given his contextual reconstruction work, we can speculate that the author of 2 Thessalonians was working with a limited Pauline corpus, namely only the abovementioned letters, and would have specified them as every letter. In the case of 1 Thessalonians, it would not have mattered to Giblin that it did not fall into the "every letter" category containing Paul's handwritten signature since it would have been used only for content by the later author. However, this is still a conjecture based on contextual reconstruction and is open to interpretation.
[84] Rist, "Pseudepigraphy and the Early Christians," 77.
[85] Mitchell, "1 and 2 Thessalonians," 60; Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 127.

Thess 3:17 was written by someone in the post-Pauline period who had knowledge of some form of Pauline letter collection and intended the letter he wrote, now called 2 Thessalonians, to look like a genuine Pauline letter.

Regardless of whether their arguments are correct or not, some may wonder whether they are the result of a close examination of the grammatical and linguistic elements in the verse under discussion, i.e., the methodological rationale for these claims. However, little grammatical or linguistic consideration is given to these claims. Instead, most modern critical scholars have simply reiterated the underlying idea that the pseudonymous author's primary concern in 2 Thess 3:17 is to appear Pauline, as evidenced by his use of Paul's handwritten signature as an authenticating mark and his emphasis that Paul wrote this letter. In other words, among the advocates of non-Pauline authorship, there has been little serious grammatical and linguistic investigation of why 2 Thess 3:17 should be regarded as an emphatic authenticating remark, and little explanation of the formal and semantic grounds from which such a conclusion is derived. It appears that most modern critical scholars have tended to single out only a few specific words or phrases to characterize the entire text of 2 Thess 3:17 as representing an emphatic authenticating comment by the author. Few have approached 2 Thess 3:17 by considering the structural arrangement and hierarchical relationship of the linguistic elements that make up the statement in that verse and how they are organized to form a communicative unit that linguistically reflects and creates the situation with which the statement in question is ultimately concerned. It is also hard to find any discussion of how it contributes to shaping the discourse of 2 Thessalonians or its functional

significance as a meaningful component within it, beyond understanding its meaning at the level of a clause or sentence.

Pauline authorship advocates have also addressed the authorship question of 2 Thessalonians raised by 2 Thess 3:17. As with their main approaches to the other major arguments mentioned earlier, they have offered alternative explanations based on the Pauline authorship perspective to counter the claims of critical scholars about this verse in question. In other words, they have focused on providing counter-explanatory responses to the problems of historical plausibility raised by the phrase "in every letter" in 2 Thess 3:17 and the supposed features that the pseudonymous author intentionally deceives by overemphasizing Pauline authorship. They have consistently emphasized that these raised features are not necessarily indicative of the non-Pauline authorship nature of 2 Thessalonians but can be adequately explained from the Pauline authorship perspective.

Scholars who support Pauline authorship dispute the notion that 2 Thessalonians was written by a later author in the post-Pauline era with access to the entire Pauline corpus, as they point out that 2 Thessalonians has a close relationship only with 1 Thessalonians and not with any other letter of Paul. They find it challenging to accept that the author of 2 Thessalonians, who had access to and familiarity with other Pauline letters in addition to 1 Thessalonians, would maintain an intertextual relationship exclusively with the latter when writing 2 Thessalonians. Citing Richard I. Pervo's statement, "[in the case of 2 Thessalonians,] Pauline intertextuality is essentially limited to a single work: 1 Thessalonians," Foster argues against the hypothesis proposed by modern critical scholars by noting that if the pseudonymous author of 2 Thessalonians had written this letter in the late first or second century, when the Pauline corpus would

have been complete, it would be strange for the letter to have been influenced solely by 1

Thessalonians, without clear evidence of influence from other Pauline letters.[86] Similarly,

Nicholl questions why such a later author would use only 1 Thessalonians as the basis of

his work and ignore other Pauline letters.[87] That is, scholars who support the Pauline

authorship view refute the idea that the "in every letter" phrase alludes to the time when

the Pauline corpus was completed by appealing to the close relationship between First

and Second Thessalonians, which is characterized by a high degree of similarity or

affinity. Defenders of Pauline authorship thus find it more historically plausible that Paul

wrote 2 Thessalonians immediately after 1 Thessalonians, rather than it being written by

a later author when the Pauline letter collection was complete and accessible.

Surprisingly, however, unlike the cases of modern critical scholars mentioned above,

there is little discussion among scholars or commentators who see 2 Thessalonians as the

work of Paul about what "every letter" might refer to or mean. Given that 2

Thessalonians was written shortly after 1 Thessalonians, it presents a challenging

dilemma to explain.[88]

Against the idea that the pseudonymous author of 2 Thess 3:17 overemphasizes

Pauline authorship by using Paul's handwritten signature in order to create the impression

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[86] Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?"159; Pervo, *Making of Paul*, 77.

[87] Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*,177. For other scholars who have made similar arguments Gupta, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 216; Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*, 50.

[88] This tendency is evident in recent scholarly works on Thessalonians, including Brookins' commentary and Gupta's monograph, neither of which do provide any explanation of what "every letter" means. Weima may be an exception to this, as he suggests that the phrase "in every letter" indicates that Paul always ended his letters with an autograph statement, even in those letters where he did not explicitly mention it. It is likely that at the end of his previous letter to the Thessalonians, probably at 1 Thess 5:27, Paul took over from the secretary and wrote a command in his own hand using the first person singular form from the literal plural that had been used until then. See Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*, 637. Karl P. Donfried also sees 1 Thess 5:27 as a personal note written in the hand of the author. See Donfried, **"**Issues of Authorship," 109–10. However, it remains questionable whether 1 Thess 5:27, to which Weima alludes, construes such a situation as he portrays, and more importantly, as Weima also acknowledges, this verse does not clearly indicate an authorial signature, as 2 Thess 3:17 does.

that the letter is the work of Paul, proponents of Pauline authorship have offered several

counterarguments. First, in response to the claim that the allegedly exaggerated authorial

statement about authorship at the end of 2 Thessalonians is a unique feature of the letter,

not found in other Pauline letters, and thus its authenticity is called into question, Gordon

D. Fee notes that there are other forms of concluding personal remarks where Paul makes

a similar emphatic statement, for example in Gal 6:11. Fee thus argues that the claim that

the exaggerated personal statement of the author and its appearance only in 2

Thessalonians is evidence of non-Pauline authorship is invalid.[89] Furthermore, Steve

Reece notes that the appearance of an emphatic authorial statement used to establish the

authenticity of a letter is found in a wide range of ancient Greco-Roman letters beyond

the writings of the New Testament letters.[90] In light of Reece's observation, it is

unreasonable to question the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians on the basis of the mere

presence of the emphatic authenticating comment in 2 Thess 3:17, assuming that it is the

feature found only in the letter. Rather, it should be seen as the use of one of the common

epistolary devices of the time, serving the specific purpose of the letter. As for the

specific purpose of using this emphatic authenticating comment in 2 Thess 3:17,

advocates of Pauline authorship usually refer to 2 Thess 2:2, which is believed to speak

of a forged letter, purportedly from Paul and likely being circulated among the

Thessalonians. Many of them suggest that Paul was verifying the authenticity of the letter

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[89] Fee, *Thessalonians*, 341–42.

[90] Reece, *Paul's Large Letters*, 51–52. As an example, Reece cites a letter from Plato to Dionysius. This letter contains a customary epistolary greeting along with the author's sign confirming the letter's authenticity: Πλάτων Διονυσίῳ τυράννῳ Συρακουσῶν εὖ πράττειν. Ἀρχή σοι τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ἔστω καὶ ἅμα σύμβολον ὅτι παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ ἐστιν ("Plato to Dionysius, Tyrant of Syracuse. Do well. Let the beginning of my letter to you serve at the same time as a sign [*symbolon*] that it is from me"). As a special note, I referred to Gupta's research on Reece to discuss his idea and example here. See Gupta, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 216n104.

he was writing, namely 2 Thessalonians, in order to warn the Thessalonian believers

about the forged letter in circulation. In this regard, Nicholl believes that when 2 Thess

2:2 and 3:17 are taken together, it is likely that there was a forged letter in Paul's name

that may have been in the possession of the Thessalonians.[91] Gene L. Green thus presents

Paul as strongly affirming the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians that he wrote in light of the

forgery that was being circulated among the Thessalonians.[92] Meanwhile, it is worth

noting that Weima offers another explanation of the purpose or function of 2 Thess 3:17.

He argues that 2 Thess 3:17 is primarily concerned with Paul's authority rather than the

letter's authenticity, as commonly believed. More specifically, Paul highlights his

authority in 2 Thess 3:17 because he expects some rebellious idlers to disobey his

command for self-sufficient work, as implied in 2 Thess 3:14. According to Weima's

suggestion, if the author's handwritten statement in 2 Thess 3:17 is construed as

suggesting the authoritative rather than the authenticating function, then the main

evidence for the non-Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, which views this statement

as an exaggeration to make it look like Paul's writing, becomes irrelevant.[93]

The approach of scholars defending the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians in

addressing the issues surrounding 2 Thess 3:17 can be characterized as follows. The first

thing to note in their treatment of 2 Thess 3:17 is that they, too, consider the author's

signature in his own hand to be a note emphasizing authorship. However, the difference

between their interpretation and that of modern critical scholars lies in their inferential

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[91] Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 177–78.

[92] Green, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 61. For scholars who hold a similar view, see Hill, "Establishing the Church," 5; Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" 157–58; Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*, 50. On the other hand, H. Rongy suggests that the letter to which 2 Thess 2:2 refers is not a forgery, but rather a letter from another prominent Christian leader that is mistakenly attributed to Paul. See Rongy, "De Adjunctis et Scopo," 97–100.

[93] Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*, 637–38. See also Weima, *Neglected Endings*, 126–27.

conclusion that Paul, the author of 2 Thessalonians, was in a situation where a forged letter in his name was being circulated in the Thessalonian church, and for this reason he needed to warn the Thessalonians to distinguish his authentic letters from the forged ones. They reasoned that he accomplished this by adding a remark to his final greeting, emphasizing the authenticity of his letter with his handwritten signature. Ultimately, despite disagreements on whether the true author of the signature in 2 Thess 3:17 is Paul or a later author pretending to be Paul, both those who reject and those who affirm Pauline authorship tend to interpret the text in question in similar ways. Both place greater emphasis on the author's act of authenticating authorship than on the author's act of greeting. On the other hand, Weima's view of 2 Thess 3:17 as semantically reflecting an authoritative rather than an authenticating function is an exception to this trend. However, most proponents of Pauline authorship, including Weima, fail to consider the underlying grammatical structure of the statement in 2 Thess 3:17, in which the final greeting word group functions as a grammatical head term, with the remaining word groups serving as subordinate or elaborating components. The implications they suggest for the functions of the statement in 2 Thess 3:17 had to be derived from the grammatical and semantic considerations of the linguistic form and structure explicitly manifested in the text.

Another characteristic of how Pauline authorship advocates approach 2 Thess 3:17 is by trying to reconstruct the situation that might have led to the attribution of the wording in the verse to Paul. However, their approach often lacks sufficient theoretical and methodological considerations. Most tend to single out specific words, phrases, or ideas without considering their co-textual relationships with other grammatical elements

surrounding them in the text. This narrow focus often leads to the mistaken assumption that these isolated elements fully represent the larger situation construed by the Thessalonian texts. This tendency is particularly evident in their treatment of the issues they are concerned with, which are often conveyed through distinct grammatical forms and structures within the text. For example, when analyzing the allegedly forged letter in Paul's name presented in a complex prepositional structure in 2 Thess 2:2, and the statement in 2 Thess 3:17, where the author's signature wording is subordinated to the final greeting word group placed in a prime position, little attention is paid to their grammatical and linguistic nuances, or to the co-textual environments that surround them. As with the interpretive tendencies of modern critical scholars discussed above, the defenders of Pauline authorship also approach the issues under discussion without careful grammatical and linguistic consideration and with little concern for addressing them at the level of discourse beyond isolated words and phrases.

Concluding Remarks

The historical overview of the authorship debate of 2 Thessalonians in relation to 1 Thessalonians discussed so far can lead to the following three conclusions. First, most scholars, whether they support the pseudonymous or authentic Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, begin by acknowledging the existence of internal contradictions between the two Thessalonian letters, which are commonly presented as the four major arguments. Since the early nineteenth century, these supposedly contradictory textual elements and meanings between the two letters have gone largely unquestioned by scholars. The debate has focused solely on whether these discrepancies are the result of different authorship or deliberate intentions by the same author. Second, although these perceived internal

contradictions between First and Second Thessalonians are clearly related to issues of textual properties, they have not been addressed with rigorous linguistic methodology or analytical tools. Most have addressed the textual problems raised by the four major arguments mostly at the level of words and phrases, without serious consideration of the different types of meaning represented by different grammatical forms and structures at different levels of the text. Third, while most scholars involved in the authorship debate of the Thessalonian letters have focused on reconstructing the underlying situation of the letters based on their view of authorship, they have often overlooked the need for a precise definition of the situation of the text and an appropriate theoretical framework for its identification. In reviewing the state of the scholarly debate over the authorship of the Thessalonian correspondence, particularly from a methodological perspective, it is be observed that the debate has continued without significant methodological advances or serious consideration of the use of appropriate analytical tools to address the grammatical and textual elements related to the authorship question. As a result, only arguments proposed by previous generations have been reiterated or enumerated to this day.

In light of current scholarly trends surrounding the authorship of 2 Thessalonians and its relationship with 1 Thessalonians, this study will approach the issue using a linguistically oriented methodology and analytical tools that have not received much attention in this debate. Through the lens of Systemic Functional Linguistics and the register analysis it provides for examining the text in terms of a realizable correlation between grammatical forms, semantics, and context, this study will address the issues of the relationship between First and Second Thessalonians and authorship, focusing on the following two aspects. First, this study will apply the analytical tools used in dealing with

register and the text that instantiates it to the reading of the Thessalonian letters, in order to determine whether their contradictory textual properties, as suggested in the four main arguments, are actually present. Second, the study will attempt to identify and compare the registers of the individual texts of First and Second Thessalonians, with consequent implications for the type of situation each text construes and how they relate to each other, in an effort to better understand the relationship between the two letters and the authorship.

CHAPTER 3: A THEORY OF REGISTER WITHIN SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS FOR DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF FIRST AND SECOND THESSALONIANS

Preliminary Considerations

In this study, the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach serves as the primary theoretical and methodological framework for the discourse analysis of First and Second Thessalonians in Greek. The adoption of SFL is grounded in its extensive capabilities for analyzing discourse patterns and linguistic features across a range of textual types and sociocultural contexts. Specifically, the framework provides a detailed lens for scrutinizing how texts operate within their social environments, elucidating the complex roles language plays in both conveying meanings and achieving communicative goals. Given its versatility in analyzing diverse texts and contexts, SFL emerges as an ideal choice for a thorough examination of First and Second Thessalonians, considering their distinctive linguistic and contextual elements.[1]

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[1] Compared to other linguistic theories and methodologies, SFL offers distinct advantages, making it particularly suitable for analyzing naturally occurring texts, such as those in the New Testament. While many linguistic models prioritize exclusively grammatical and formal aspects or are predominantly concerned with the psychological, cognitive, or physiological facets in exploring the nature of human language, SFL emphasizes the functional aspect of language as instantiated in texts within specific situations. This theoretical perspective ensures that SFL goes beyond merely examining the structural form of language, delving into its intrinsic purpose and the meanings it imparts. SFL hence underscores the importance of the context in which language is used, recognizing that understanding language is intrinsically linked to the cultural, social, and situational factors that influence its use. Through this socio-semiotic perspective, SFL effectively explores the interplay between language and context, offering a comprehensive understanding of how linguistic choices both reflect and shape social practices within broader cultural contexts. See Butler, *Structure and Function*, 60; Martin, "Genre and Activity," 216–18; Matthiessen, "Systemic Functional Linguistic," 435–37.

A cornerstone of SFL is the concept of register, which offers a systematized analytical model to identify, categorize, and describe linguistic variations specific to situational use. Such an approach aids in discerning how language choices in texts align with or contribute to primary communicative goals and discourse functions. Register analysis within SFL encompasses three key components: lexicogrammatical analysis, functional assessment of linguistic features, and the relation of these features to their situational context.[2] Through this lens, we aim for a deeper grasp of how language conveys meaning and facilitates social interactions within and through texts.[3]

In recent decades, there has been a significant upswing in the adoption of SFL's register analysis as both a theoretical framework and a guiding methodology for reading and interpreting biblical texts within the field of New Testament studies. This linguistic concept, coupled with the analytical tools it provides, has proven valuable for a multitude of research endeavors related to the New Testament.[4] By leveraging the foundational tenets of SFL and specifically referencing the concept of register, this study seeks to elucidate the intricate interplay between language, meaning, and social contexts in First

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[2] In SFL, the term "lexicogrammar" merges vocabulary (lexis) and syntactic structure (grammar) into a unified system. Rather than treating them as distinct entities, SFL views lexicogrammar as the primary means through which language realizes meaning. It is a pivotal concept that underscores the inseparable link between word choice, sentence structure, and the meanings we wish to convey in particular contexts. This convergence of lexis and syntax speaks to SFL's holistic approach to understanding language as a resource for making meaning in specific social situations. See Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 7.

[3] The term "within and through texts" is used here to emphasize how SFL approaches a text from a multifaceted perspective when conducting textual analysis. The "within" denotes a focus on analyzing the texts as distinct semantic units, highlighting their meaningful linguistic attributes and choices. On the other hand, "through" suggests an exploration of how these texts function in, interact with, and are shaped by their broader social and cultural contexts. This approach underscores the comprehensive nature of SFL, which perceives texts not just for their individualized language structures but also in relation to the larger communicative environment they operate within. Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 5; Martin and Rose, *Working with Discourse*, 3–4.

[4] Reed, *Philippians*; Martín-Asensio, *Acts of the Apostles*; Westfall, *Hebrews*; Lee, *Romans*; Land, *2 Corinthians*; Lamb, *Johannine Writings*; Porter, *Romans*; Yoon, *Galatians*; Dvorak, *1 Corinthians*; Liu, *Petrine Texts*; Kurschner, *Revelation*; among others.

and Second Thessalonians. An anticipated outcome is enhanced insight into the

interpretation of these letters, especially concerning the debated issue of authorship,

stemming from the purportedly problematic textual relationship between the two.

To set the stage, the initial portion of this chapter presents the core principles of

register within SFL. Following this, I will delineate my approach to analyzing the

Thessalonian letters using discourse analysis grounded in the linguistic concept of

register, which is specifically tailored and adapted to the Greek language of the New

Testament.

Defining Register in Systemic Functional Linguistics

Basic Notion of Register

M. A. K. Halliday, commonly known as the foundational figure of SFL, defines register

as a variation of language according to use.[5] This suggests that register does not merely

concern the lexicon or syntactic structures we select, but delves into how and why we

employ them in different situations, tailoring our language to align with specific contexts

and participants. To deepen our understanding of register, it is instructive to compare it

with other linguistic variation concepts like idiolect and dialect. While idiolect and

dialect are variations tied to specific users—primarily influenced by individual or

regional characteristics—register is distinctly shaped by the social context of language

use.[6] Hence, while idiolect and dialect reflect who is speaking, register sheds even more

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[5] Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 29; Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 38–39.

[6] For a discussion on specifying variations of language in use from a system network perspective, see Land, "Varieties of the Greek Language."

light on the situational backdrop, emphasizing that a nuanced understanding of any discourse requires recognizing the paramount importance social context has on register.[7]

Considering the principles of register that guide how language inherently varies according to use, every word, grammatical structure, and textual arrangement we encounter in a discourse is not random but is selected based on its interaction with the situation it engages. Indeed, even when addressing the same topic or subject matter, the language chosen can vary considerably based on the specific situational context that necessitates such variation.[8] Consider the case of a medical practitioner. In more technical settings, where the emphasis is on precision and detail, this leads to the use of specialized medical jargon. In contrast, when the setting becomes personal and demands clarity for a non-specialist audience, the language becomes more general, aiming for comprehension rather than clinical accuracy. This distinction underscores that the variation in language mirrors the variation in situation.[9]

Moreover, even the relationship dynamics between individuals can lead to noticeable linguistic variations. Take, for instance, two students in a school. If these students share a close and amicable bond, their conversations might be laden with shared jokes, warm tones, and casual expressions. However, should the dynamics of their relationship sour, the very same physical setting—the school—might witness an exchange marked by coldness, formality, or even hostile undertones. At a cursory glance, both scenarios may be categorized under a broad register of "school conversations

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[7] In light of this, Halliday differentiates between these types of language variation, defining idiolect and dialect as variations of language according to the user, while register is a variation of language according to use. Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 41. See also Hudson, *Sociolinguistics*, 35.

[8] Levin and Snow, "Situational Variations," 47.

[9] Hasan, "Description of Context," 9–10.

between friends." Yet, upon more refined examination, it becomes evident that these are, in fact, distinct registers, separated by the nuances of interpersonal relationships. Such subtleties underscore the importance of precision when discerning registers.[10] Just as the broad strokes might label both as conversations between school friends, a delicate discernment would identify them as "amicable school interactions" versus "strained school interactions." These differences demonstrate that even with consistent participants and settings, the interpersonal dynamics or the affective context can greatly influence linguistic choices.[11] Expanding on the earlier point, the variation in language not only mirrors the variation in situation but also reflects the subtler nuances and dynamics of the situational or interactional context.[12] However, while situations do not impose language choices deterministically, they do influence speakers and writers to select linguistic forms that are specifically tailored to the unique characteristics of the context.[13]

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[10] See Moore, "Modelling Register," 22–24; Biber et al., "Reconceptualizing Register," 581–82.

[11] However, it is not to say that we should endlessly dissect a discourse until it becomes irreducibly unique when identifying, discerning, or categorizing registers of texts. The depth to which we delineate a particular discourse or language pattern often depends on our research interests and objectives. The act of examining, differentiating, and classifying registers can be subjective, driven by specific research concerns. Depending on the goals of analysis, registers can be broadly or finely categorized. A broader lens might focus on more general subject matters or discursive patterns, while a more delicate approach would hone in on nuanced variations.

[12] It may seem premature to discuss this at this juncture, but the preceding examples shed light on why I have chosen a register analytical approach for the authorship issue of the Thessalonian letters. If we align with the perspectives of critics who champion the non-Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians—citing major arguments they regard as evidence for its pseudonymous nature rather than an authentic letter from Paul—the Thessalonian letters emerge as distinct registers. This is particularly striking given that both letters address the same subject matter of the parousia, and communication occurs between the same apostolic figure and the church recipients. Yet critics regard the two Thessalonian letters as having completely different perspectives on the nature, timing, and implications of the parousia, as well as contrasting interpersonal relationships between the author and the recipients. From a linguistic standpoint, these observations by the critics can be regarded as indicating that the two Thessalonian letters operate within different registers. Though critics have not explicitly invoked the term "register," their observations hint at its principles when assessed with the delicacy needed to discern linguistic nuances. This study aims to determine whether the registers of the two Thessalonian letters differ as posited by the critical arguments used to deny the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians in relation to 1 Thessalonians. A delicate register analysis of First and Second Thessalonians might ascertain if the parousia topic is indeed discussed with distinctive linguistic variations concerning its timing, and if the interactional dynamics between Paul and the Thessalonian recipients shift from the first to the second letter through discernible linguistic markers.

[13] Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 25.

Building on this, as external observers, whether we read a written text or overhear a spoken exchange, we are often able to glean significant insights into the underlying context in which communication occurs, even though we are not primary participants in the dialogue. This deduction arises largely from the specific linguistic choices made by the speakers or writers. The language employed serves as a window not only into the subject matter being discussed but also into the identities and roles of the communicators. It allows us to discern subtle dynamics such as power relations, emotions, or intentions at play. Moreover, certain verbal cues or terminologies can provide insights into the activities being discussed, as well as reveal particular stances, beliefs, or attitudes that the communicator holds.[14] For example, in general cases, the use of formal language could denote power dynamics or a hierarchical relationship, suggesting professional or authoritative interactions, while casual slang or colloquialisms might imply closeness, familiarity, or a shared community. Similarly, a communicator's use of specialized terms or industry-specific language can unveil their expertise or engagement in a specific field, as well as indicate their attitudes towards the topic at hand. Thus, even as mere spectators, the richness and specificity of language enable us to discern a vivid picture of the situational context, emphasizing the powerful role language plays in signalling and shaping our understanding of social interactions.[15]

Given the preceding discussion, the central role of register within SFL becomes evident, serving as a crucial lens through which the intricate interplay between language and context is understood. These two strata, language and context, are inextricably intertwined in a dialectical relationship, wherein the register becomes pivotal in

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[14] See Enkvist, "Discourse Strategies," 3–4; Tann, "Context and Meaning," 460–61.
[15] Asp, "What Is a System?" 29; Martin and Rose, *Working with Discourse*, 25.

determining the social purpose and communicative effectiveness of a text, standing as an

exemplar of how language manifests within specific contexts to convey layered

meanings.[16] This interdependence ensures that every linguistic selection is both

influenced by and further influences the context, providing a nuanced understanding of

the communicative event's appropriateness and relevance. Within specified contextual

boundaries, language encodes not only the subjects of discussion and the participants but

also their respective activities in terms of their functional roles and semantic processes,

using its culturally accepted linguistic forms, thereby delineating distinct viewpoints,

behaviours, and interpersonal dynamics. In tandem, context actively steers linguistic

choices, directing communicators towards specific lexicogrammatical selections that

embody distinct functional meanings and semantic nuances.[17]

In the framework of SFL, *register analysis* serves as a methodological approach

to investigate the relationship between language and its immediate situational context.

This is achieved in a more explicit manner by quantifiably and categorically measuring

lexicogrammatical items within texts.[18] Instead of an unfocused and undefined

examination of linguistic features, which might overlook the variegated and multi-layered

nature of language use in actual discourse situations, register analysis in SFL

systematically investigates how specific lexicogrammatical forms and structures

correspond to variable contextual parameters.[19] Within this model, functional meanings

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[16] Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, 145.

[17] Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, 31–32.

[18] Biber and Conrad, *Register, Genre, and Style*, 47–49; Matthiessen, "Register in the Round," 221–3; Moore, "Register Analysis," 424–26.

[19] The analytical approach illustrated here could be regarded as exemplifying the bottom-up approach in discourse analysis. Within SFL and broader discourse analytical methodologies, two dominant paradigms emerge: the bottom-up and top-down approaches. The bottom-up approach begins with specific linguistic details and progresses towards broader contextual interpretations. It primarily focuses on lexicogrammatical elements, using them as foundational markers to identify and understand larger patterns

act as an intermediary bridge, linking the chosen lexicogrammatical forms with the surrounding context they resonate with and adapt to. This method, based on the conceptual foundations of register within SFL, seeks to clarify the complex interplay between language and its various operational contexts.

Guided by the SFL perspective, we recognize that language is not static; it adjusts based on situational imperatives. The bond between language and context is shaped by specific requirements, with influences ranging from the immediate environment to broad cultural paradigms.[20] However, within this maze of potential influences, the SFL framework is particularly discerning. Specifically, it zeroes in on those contextual elements that have a direct bearing on linguistic decisions, ensuring a relationship rooted in systematic analysis and concrete observations. Leading from this, it becomes imperative to delve deeper into how the SFL approach defines and theorizes context.

Contexts in Register

Building on our exploration of the concept of register within SFL as the mechanism that discerns linguistic choices driven by distinct contexts, we now probe its foundational

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or structures in discourse. In contrast, the top-down approach begins with a pre-determined context or conceptual framework and then investigates the specific linguistic features that substantiate or refine that framework. Here, the emphasis starts with the discourse's overarching context and transitions to the particular language choices within it. In particular, employing the bottom-up approach could prove valuable for examining the detailed intricacies of First and Second Thessalonians in the Greek New Testament, which this study takes as its primary subject. This approach may allow for a more explicit examination of the text through its linguistic items and could help avoid introducing presupposed conceptions of assumed contexts or any historical presumptions before delving into the actual text. In other words, it might prevent the imposition of these preconceptions onto the texts when reading and interpreting them. However, it is essential to recognize that these approaches cannot be entirely separated or exclusively deployed as strictly bottom-up or top-down when executing register analysis in SFL. Instead, these approaches are often interwoven in a complementary fashion: from the bottom-up perspective, patterns and structures emerge from the details, while from the top-down perspective, the analyst can cross-check the lexicogrammatical choices against the broader contextual presumptions. In essence, harmonizing these approaches and their respective strengths remains a primary principle guiding the practice of discourse analysis. See Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, 234–36.

[20] Halliday, *Learning How to Mean*, 65; Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, 39–41.

underpinnings: the context of culture and the context of situation. While both have a profound influence, they function on different scales: the former encapsulates broader cultural paradigms, while the latter concentrates on immediate situational demands. Thus, while the context of situation deals with the immediate environmental conditions that influence linguistic choices, the context of culture offers a panoramic view, capturing the broader cultural narrative embedded within language structures.[21] It is within the realm of register that the interrelationship between these two contextual layers and their influence on linguistic choices becomes central to our discussion within the SFL framework.

Context of Culture

Focusing on the context of culture within SFL, it encompasses the overarching cultural and societal fabric, highlighting such integral and pervasive elements as norms, beliefs, ideologies, practices, values, conventions, and traditions.[22] It further includes institutional frameworks, political and economic systems, social structures, and the diverse language behaviours employed in communication. All of these elements collectively shape, either directly or subtly, the patterns of language use in texts.[23] Having examined the myriad ways in which cultural elements can shape language use, it is essential to recognize that the relationship between language and culture is not merely unidirectional. This perspective is rooted in the socio-semiotic perspective of SFL, which posits that language both shapes and is shaped by the cultural contexts in which it operates.[24] The shaping effect manifests as language actively constructing and interpreting reality, defining

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[21] Leckie-Tarry, *Language and Context*, 23.
[22] Halliday, "Notion of 'Context'," 283–85.
[23] Leckie-Tarry, *Language and Context*, 17.
[24] Halliday, "Text as Semantic Choice," 58; Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, 190–92.

situations and relationships, and influencing thoughts and behaviours. At the same time,

language is shaped by the prevailing cultural values, social roles, and interpersonal

dynamics, as well as ongoing changes in cultural practice within a community embedded

in that culture. This illustrates the complex, mutual relationship in which language and

culture simultaneously construct and are constructed by each other.[25]

One profound implication of the context of culture within SFL is observed in the

textured layers of meaning that texts acquire within specific cultural milieus. Consider,

for instance, the traditional Greco-Roman salutatory term χαίρειν, which carries the

lexical meaning "rejoice" and is customarily used to signify "greetings" in epistolary

contexts. Often found in common correspondence, this expression, while seemingly

straightforward, holds connotations rooted in broader cultural etiquettes and shared

interactional habits within the Hellenistic world. Furthermore, in the letters of Paul to the

Christian communities, a unique salutation such as χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη, meaning "Grace

to you and peace," is employed. This specific phrasing, while aligning with the

customary Greco-Roman greeting conventions often found in non-Christian letters, also

conveys a specially adapted expression that is distinctively shaped by the communal and

cultural context in which it is used. It may illustrate a distinct cultural behaviour shared

by early Christians in forging an interactional bond through this unique mode of greeting,

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[25] The shaping effect can be seen in the active construction and interpretation of reality through language. For instance, the invention of the internet led to the creation and adoption of new words and phrases such as "email," "online," and "social media," which define our modern interaction with technology. Conversely, language's adaptability to social contexts is evident in its reflection and adaptation to communal practices and traditions. An example of this can be found in the evolution of culinary terminology that mirrors regional ingredients and cooking methods. The unique names for dishes and preparation techniques in various cultures not only reflect the local environment, traditions, and tastes but are also shaped by these contexts. This connection between language and local identity emphasizes the multifaceted relationship between language and cultural context, aligning with the principle in SFL that language reflects and adapts to the prevailing norms, roles, relationships, and changes within a community or culture, illustrating the intricate interplay between language and sociocultural contexts.

reflecting the particular cultural milieu of the community. These cultural implications consequently add depth to the understanding of semantic content, affirming that language in texts transcends its role as a neutral communicative tool to become a sophisticated repository of cultural paradigms and identities.[26]

However, it is essential to recognize that not all elements within a community's cultural framework necessarily exert influence on a given text. Therefore, a meticulous approach must be employed, one that carefully identifies and selects those cultural aspects that are relevant and may potentially, or even directly, bear upon the text in question.[27] This refined understanding helps to avoid overgeneralization and ensures that the analysis remains firmly grounded in the authentic interplay between language and culture as it appears within particular contexts. With respect to Paul's letters in the New Testament, examinations of these texts become more focused, attending to cultural aspects that may exert a more direct influence than any other on them in terms of textual dimensions.

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[26] Hasan, "Description of Context," 13; Bartlett, "Context," 381. An interesting example of culture-specific language usage can be found in the way Korean people often make greetings and farewells using expressions tied to eating meals. When greeting someone, they might say "Have you eaten?" (translated into a general English expression). When saying goodbye, they might use the expression "Let's have a meal later," and even when expressing gratitude, the phrase "I'll buy a meal for you later" or "I'll treat you to a meal later" may be used. These particular expressions, unique to Korean culture, are not merely literal invitations to share a meal but rather semiotic resources that convey concern for well-being and amity. They serve as customary means for exchanging greetings and expressing thanks, rooted in various historical, social, communal, and familial factors (Of course, these phrases, or variations thereof, are also employed in the contexts in which the topic of eating meals is foregrounded, such as inquiries about whether eating has occurred—as might be conducted by physicians or pharmacists—or for inviting and scheduling actual meals). Without knowledge of the sociocultural meanings behind these expressions, some individuals unfamiliar with Korean culture may misunderstand them as literal statements. For example, they might continue to wait for the day to share a meal, thinking that the person is actually making a commitment to dine together after receiving the goodbye phrase "Let's have a meal later." This anecdote illustrates the intricate connections between language and culture, emphasizing how language functions not simply as a means of relaying information but also as a rich reflection and embodiment of cultural norms, paradigms, and identities.

[27] Leckie-Tarry, *Language and Context*, 24.

Among others, particular attention is given to the Greco-Roman epistolary conventions and the specific language utilized within these letters, that is, Greek during the Hellenistic period, or Koine Greek. The letters of Paul adhere to the standard epistolary forms, serving as a communication medium between individuals or communities distant in physical location. These forms align with the prevailing letter-writing conventions of that time.[28] However, while maintaining continuity with established letter-writing practices, Paul's letters also incorporate many unique features not found in other non-Christian letters of the period.[29] These include specific phraseologies and distinctively expanded and newly created structural elements that mirror both the particular communicative needs and the evolving cultural imperatives of early Christianity. As a result, they reflect a dedication to tradition while simultaneously demonstrating an innovative adaptation to the distinctive cultural context of early Christian correspondence.

With regard to the linguistic dimension of the letters of Paul, since they are written in Greek during the Hellenistic period, comprehension of the Greek language as a vehicle for communication and as a meaning-making resource is essential.[30] This understanding implies that the language in the letters should be analyzed based on its unique characteristics, which are generated according to its inherent system, not from the perspectives of other languages' systems. As a representative example, the verbal tense-forms in Greek should be approached not from the perspective that they convey the temporal meaning as seen in those of English, but rather that they grammaticalize a

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[28] Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 5–8; White, *Form and Function*, 7.
[29] Weima, *Ancient Letter Writer*, 2–4; Porter, "Functional Letter Perspective," 18–20.
[30] See Porter, "Greek Language," 99–101.

semantic category of aspect, which realizes the language user's reasoned subjective choice of conception of a process. Likewise, not only the verbal tense-forms but also the uses of mood-forms, voice-forms, cases, participial and infinitival constructions, person indications, word order, and other syntactic and semantic features should be approached from the Greek language's system and its paradigmatic organization in the meaning-making process, recognizing the interplay of lexicogrammatical choices and their corresponding semantic functions.

Thus, understanding the literary environment of the Thessalonian letters, along with the Greek language system that activates the actual use of language in them, within the broader cultural context, is essential for a comprehensive analysis of the texts' register. Of course, beyond these two foundational aspects directly related to the textual dimension, it may be preferable to examine meticulously other cultural considerations, including the religious milieus and any social, institutional, political, or economic factors featured in the Thessalonica city when the letters were composed. It may also be preferable to consider the more expansive cultural context with which the early Christians uniquely engaged. These collective cultural factors likely shaped the Thessalonian letters. However, this study does not exhaustively or intricately explore these cultural elements, as that investigation falls beyond its scope. This approach is also intentional, aiming to avoid the possible danger of imposing such cultural considerations onto the Thessalonian texts before examining the texts. Instead, if necessary, this study would identify relevant elements of the context of culture through the examination of language in the texts, seeking features that reflect these cultural elements in some way, thereby ensuring that the investigation remains grounded in the Thessalonian texts themselves.

involving the translation of indigenous languages on a non-English-speaking island,

highlight that the context of situation is a specific scenario essential for interpreting a

particular language use.[33] This idea of context of situation was further refined by the

linguist J. R. Firth. Moving beyond Malinowski's focus on specific scenarios, Firth

expanded the concept into an abstract framework suitable for comprehensive linguistic

theory. His preliminary categorization identified three overarching parameters that

delineate a context of situation: the relevant features of participants; the objects pertinent

to the situation; and the impact of verbal action on those involved.[34] This tripartite

classification paved the way for a more profound understanding of the dynamics between

language and its immediate situational context. However, as insightful as Firth's initial

approach was, it necessitated further refinement to capture the intricate relationships

between language, participants, and context in a more explicit manner and with greater

precision.

This necessity provided Halliday with the means to extend and modify Firth's

preliminary classification, thereby forging a close, interconnected relationship between

the systems of context and language.[35] It emphasizes the reciprocal nature of the

relationship, where the context shapes language choices and language, in turn, contributes

to constructing the context. In this sense, again, Halliday elucidates the nature of human

language as a socio-semiotic phenomenon.[36] This is the fundamental principle of SFL in

approaching language, considering it as an integral part of human behaviour, interwoven

with the fabric of social interactions. Halliday's refinement introduced his

[33] Malinowski, "Problem of Meaning," 296–97.
[34] Firth, "Technique of Semantics," 36–73.
[35] Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 5–9.
[36] Halliday, "Language as Code," 229.

conceptualization of the context of situation by categorizing and labelling three parameters: field, tenor, and mode. These contextual parameters provide a more comprehensive framework for analyzing the context of the situation in which the given discourse engages through language-in-use means.

The field parameter focuses on the subject matter of the communication, providing insights into the topics, processes, and human experiences shared by the participants. It explores what is happening, what actions are involved, and what participants or entities are partaking in these actions.[37] By examining the field, analysts can gain a deeper understanding of the content and purpose of the discourse, delving into the experiential and logical dimensions of language use. In other words, through the field of discourse, we explore the essence of the subject-driven event where the text functions, uncovering not only the lexical and grammatical choices but also the underlying motivations and the nature of participants' engagement within the text. The field, thus, serves as a foundational lens for analyzing the "what" of the discourse, guiding the interpretation of the text's subject focus and associated topics.[38]

The tenor parameter concerns itself with the interpersonal aspects of the situation, encompassing the roles, relationships, and social dynamics between the participants. It addresses the identities and social positions of those involved, including considerations of status, social relations, hierarchy, emotional tone, and attitudes of the interaction.[39]

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[37] Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, 142–3; Hasan, "Description of Context," 6–7.

[38] Hudson, *Sociolinguistics*, 49; Porter, *Romans*, 27.

[39] The term "identities" as used in the description of the tenor parameter refers to the personal roles and social statuses that individuals assume in a given communicative situation. This includes the relationships, status, and attitudes that shape their interaction. In contrast, the "participants" or "entities" discussed in the field parameter relate to the subject matter of the discourse itself, focusing on the actors, processes, and circumstances that constitute the content or subject focus of the communication. The distinction between these two uses of the term is crucial for understanding the different facets of context that the field and tenor parameters seek to elucidate. Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, 143; Halliday

Through an examination of the tenor, analysts can discern how the text functions to enact these intricate interpersonal dynamics, illuminating the power dynamics, social norms, affective dimensions, and conversational strategies that mold participants' language choices. The tenor provides insight into the "who" of the discourse, probing the relational aspects of language, such as the degrees of formality, familiarity, politeness, and alignment.[40] It enables a richer understanding of the social context, shedding light on the nuanced ways language serves to negotiate relationships, express attitudes, and influence behaviors within the communicative event.

Lastly, the mode parameter describes the channel (phonic or graphic) and medium (spoken or written) through which communication occurs, explicating the manner in which the field and tenor parameters converge to form a coherent text.[41] A fundamental element of the mode is connected to the way the text is presented—essentially, how communication is carried out. Through an analysis of the mode, analysts can apprehend the medium-specific attributes and constraints imposed on the language when the text acts as an instantiation of that language. Additionally, they can anticipate the organizational structure of the text, which aligns with the contextual parameter as characterized by the interplay of field and tenor.[42] The mode thus delineates the "how" of the discourse, focusing on aspects like channel, medium, rhetorical strategies, and organizational relations and structural realizations, providing a holistic perspective on the orchestration of linguistic resources within the communicative situation.[43]

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and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 12.
[40] Porter, *Romans*, 30–31.
[41] Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, 143.
[42] Hasan, "Description of Context," 7.
[43] Porter, *Romans*, 34.

For Halliday, these contextual parameters are not simply identifiable through cursory or subjective assessment. They are ascertained through a detailed linguistic analysis of the text, focusing particularly on the functional attributes of language manifested in semantic choices and their lexicogrammatical realizations. As a result, Halliday identifies inherent functions of language, labeling them as metafunctions—ideational, interpersonal, and textual—each of which sheds light on how language is used to construe, enact, and facilitate the contextual components of field, tenor, and mode, respectively.[44]

The ideational metafunction of language is tasked with construing our world and categorizing human experiences, making it possible to convey these understandings to others through language.[45] Its primary role lies in creating a representational model of semiotic entities. This metafunction is subdivided into the experiential and logical components. The experiential dimension revolves around representing participants, processes, and circumstances, while the logical facet is dedicated to elucidating the intricate relationships between these representations.[46] To grasp the intricacies of the ideational metafunction, a scrutiny of its lexicogrammatical elements and structures is essential. First, lexis assumes a pivotal role in representing experiences by meticulously selecting words that not only depict specific participants, processes, and circumstances

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[44] Halliday introduced the term "metafunction" to emphasize that function is integral to the comprehensive theory of language. Within the SFL framework, the term metafunction often intersects with "meaning." This indicates that metafunctions serve as avenues for constructing and conveying meaning, going beyond mere lexicogrammatical choices to also incorporate various semantic roles and structures. Furthermore, the metafunctional categories of ideational, interpersonal, and textual are not restricted to a single language; they manifest across an extensive array of linguistic variations. These can range from broadly categorized varieties of language such as English, German, French, and Greek to more specific variations within any communicative context in these languages. Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 31; Matthiessen et al., *Key Terms*, 138.

[45] Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 30.

[46] Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 19–21.

but also evoke nuanced meanings that contribute to a comprehensive portrayal of events.[47] Second, the transitivity network serves as a structural scaffold organizing clauses around verbs and participants, encapsulating the indispensable "who did what to whom under what conditions" aspect of meaning.[48] Within this network, the verb functions as a central axis, signifying the type of process—whether material, mental, or relational—and consequently, determining the types of participants it associates with. Amidst this intricate interplay, the ideational metafunction harmonizes with the field parameter within the context of the situation.[49] Through this interwoven relationship, we unveil the intricate ways in which language choices within a given communicative context are both influenced by and influential in shaping the social realities they aim to construe.

The interpersonal metafunction serves a distinct purpose in language, involving the enactment of social relationships, roles, and attitudes within communication.[50] It is fundamentally concerned with how language is utilized to bring about actions, interactions, and interpersonal dynamics. At its core lies lexical or grammatical specification, encompassing meticulous choices related to participants in communication that impact the manifestation of relationships and assessments in language.[51] Grammatical mood-forms also play a pivotal role in conveying speech roles and functions, illustrating the attitudinal and modal aspects of communication.[52] The interpersonal metafunction maintains a close correlation with the tenor parameter within

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[47] Shore, "Register," 57–58.
[48] Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 213–20.
[49] Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, 222.
[50] Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 20.
[51] Porter, "Dialect and Register," 204–206.
[52] Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 39–43; Porter, *Romans*, 33.

the context of situation. Thus, the interconnectedness between the interpersonal metafunction and the tenor parameter offers a comprehensive understanding of the relational dimensions of language use, highlighting their pivotal roles in enacting social interactions and relationships.

The textual metafunction serves as a key role of language to facilitate coherence, organization, and structure within discourse. This metafunction focuses on utilizing language to establish a cohesive and logically ordered sequence of information, ensuring the presentation of ideas in a clear and comprehensible manner.[53] Achieving this involves employing various linguistic elements such as linking, structuring, transitioning linguistic units at different levels—not confined only to words or sentences but extending beyond them—and organizing textual layers according to the degree of prominence the communicator desires to convey.[54] The significance of the textual metafunction is closely intertwined with the mode parameter. This symbolic alignment of the textual metafunction and the mode parameter ensures not only the efficacy of the message conveyed but also its contextual appropriateness, thereby realizing the fullest potential of language as a tool for facilitating an effective exchange of ideas and interactions.

One element warranting caution in examining the context of situation and the metafunctional uses of language within a text is that the context of a text does not encompass all surrounding situational elements, including the material settings that constitute the actual physical space. As previously discussed in the context of culture, the context of situation also demands discerning and selective attention. This is because the text engages only with those socio-semiotic situations that are directly relevant for the

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[53] Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 12.
[54] Porter, "Dialect and Register," 201.

metafunctional purposes of language use.[55] In this regard, Ruqaiya Hasan introduces the term "material situational setting" to elucidate the divide between material and semiotic contexts.[56] This term encompasses the actual physical environment where a text unfolds. Importantly, the material situational setting remains peripheral to the communicative event unless explicitly incorporated into the discourse. It exists as a dormant source that could, under specific circumstances, influence the ongoing verbal interactions, thereby becoming a part of the semiotic contextual landscape. It is essential to note that the material context gains semiotic relevance only when illuminated or construed within the text.[57]

On the flip side, the semiotic context is intrinsically connected to the language itself and is organized under the contextual parameters of field, tenor, and mode, which are, in turn, shaped by the corresponding ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions of language use within the text.[58] In this regard, SFL's register analysis stands in contrast to dominant interpretative habits often seen in biblical studies. One such habit is mirror reading, which tends to indiscriminately and uncritically invoke or

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[55] Halliday, "Language as Code," 8.

[56] Hasan, "What's Going On," 108.

[57] Hasan, "What's Going On," 110; Hasan, "Place of Context," 177–76. See also Bowcher, "Semiotic Sense of Context," 3–5; Cloran, "Context, Material Situation," 216–17.

[58] Consider the example of a sermon delivered in a church setting. In this case, the material situational setting involves not just the words spoken by the preacher, but also the architecture of the church, the ambient lighting, the specific placement of pews, the attire of the preacher and the congregation, and perhaps even the temperature of the room. Each of these material factors contributes to the overall situational condition in which the sermon is delivered. However, these material elements may not be directly engaged with or represented within the text of the sermon itself. This is the realm of the semiotic context, which involves the linguistic features that are specifically activated within the sermon to serve particular functions. For instance, the preacher might use imperatives to command, rhetorical questions to provoke thought, or a specific lexicon to resonate with doctrinal expositions. These linguistic choices constitute the semiotic context and are shaped by the metafunctional purposes of the language use. Therefore, while the material situational setting provides a dormant source that could potentially affect the sermon, it only gains semiotic relevance when actively engaged with or illuminated within the text of the sermon itself.

infer the material situational setting of a text, despite the text's semiotic context not necessarily encompassing all aspects of such settings. Instead, it aims to be more careful and discerning in elucidating those features of the material context that are construed and become meaningful only within the semiotic landscape of the text.

Register in Text

Building on this analytical alignment of the relationship between context and language in use, the SFL framework, drawing from the systemic functional principle, delineates the sophisticated notions of system and instantiation, along with activation and realization, or construal. In SFL, this reciprocal relationship is firmly anchored to theoretical articulations, reflecting the interplay between language and context at various levels. The complexity of this description is visually illustrated in the subsequent figure.
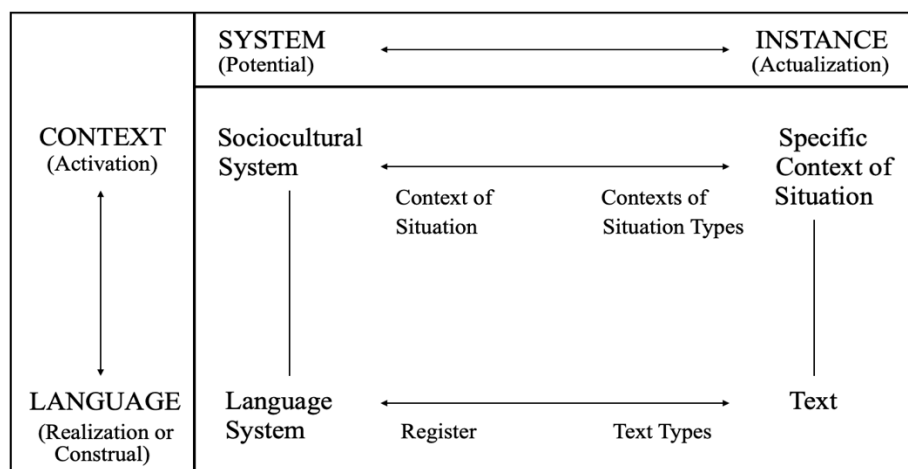
Figure 1. Relations between Context and Language[59]

This figure serves as a visual guide to the *systemic* understanding of each context and language stratum, as well as the *functional* understanding between the context and

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[59] This is adapted from Halliday, "Notion of 'Context'," 275. I also referred to Bowcher, "Semiotic Sense of Context," 2; Shore, "Register," 62; and Taverniers, "Modelling Interfaces," 293.

language strata. First, it elucidates the relationship between system and instance and the corresponding cline of instantiation within the individual strata of context and language. Within the context stratum, the sociocultural system, which refers to the context of culture as previously discussed, is instantiated within a specific context of situation that, in turn, embodies the sociocultural system in which it resides.[60] Similarly, within the language stratum, the language system, operating as a semogenic entity that provides meaning-making resources to entire members of a culture, finds its instantiation in a text.[61] The relationship between system and instance within the strata of context and language can be further understood through the concepts of potential and actualization.[62] Within the context stratum, the sociocultural system provides the potential framework that can be actualized in specific context of situation. Similarly, within the language stratum, the language system holds the potential meaning-making resources that can be actualized in a text. This ongoing transformation illustrates how the abstract potential within the system is driven to actualization in specific instances, bridging the gap between theoretical constructs and empirical manifestations.[63]

The socio-semiotic principles of SFL, however, transcend the domain of a mere cline of instantiation, probing into the interrelationship between the strata of context and

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[60] Hasan, "Description of Context," 25.
[61] Shore, "Register," 56.
[62] Taverniers, "Modelling Interfaces," 301.
[63] Halliday's analogy between weather and climate provides an illustrative parallel to understanding the relationship between system and instantiation in both contextual and linguistic domains. In his words, "Climate and weather are not two different phenomena; rather, they are the same phenomenon seen from different standpoints of the observer. What we call climate is weather seen from a greater depth of time—it is what is instantiated in the form of weather. The weather is the text: it is what goes on around us all the time" (*Halliday's Introduction*, 27–28). Extending this analogy to our discussion, the sociocultural system can be likened to the climate, underlying and defining the potentialities of specific situations, much like the language system underlies and defines the potentialities of specific texts. Both relationships exist along the cline of instantiation, defining the poles of overall potential and particular instances.

language, as neither language nor context exists in isolation. Building upon the figure presented above, the exploration of the multifarious relationship between context and language continues. The sociocultural system activates language as a system, imbuing it with the potential for meaning-making, which is uniquely shaped and shared within the given socio-cultural community. This language system reciprocally realizes the socio-cultural structure through linguistic means. In the same mechanism, the specific context of situation, as an instantiation of the sociocultural system, induces a text to be actualized. The resulting text, in turn, functions to realize or construe the specific context of situation linguistically.[64]

However, in all human cultures, there is not a single text that is wholly self-sufficient—free from any influence from other texts or language uses. In essence, when a text emerges in a specific situational context, it engages with established text types and linguistic conventions. For instance, Paul's letters are not autonomous or self-contained works; rather, they are products drawing on the epistolary traditions of the first-century Greco-Roman world and the language of Hellenistic Greek, particularly the language fitting for epistolary contexts. Such socioculturally intertextual dependence of a single text on predefined text types and modes of language use is facilitated by a sub-system situated between the system and instance poles. This sub-system constitutes a range of text types, thus providing repositories of meaning-making resources upon which a text may draw when linguistically realizing the specific situational context.[65]

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[64] Hasan, "Description of Context," 45–46; Taverniers, "Modelling Interfaces," 296–97.

[65] In this regard, Shore remarks, "A language system is a system of systems, a complex and dynamic system comprised of a number of simultaneous and interconnected subsystems" ("Register," 56).

Between the system and instance poles, intermediate patterns exist, such as contexts of situation in the context stratum and registers in the language stratum. These intermediate patterns can be perceived either as sub-systems or as sub-potential when viewed from the vantage point of the system pole, or as specific types of instances when viewed from the proximity of the instance pole.[66] First, from the system pole, the socio-cultural system includes a range of theoretical domains that constitute the sub-potential for contexts of situation, akin to how an abstract sociocultural matrix becomes increasingly delineated. Such contexts of situation can be classified according to defined criteria (i.e., field, tenor, and mode) thereby yielding more concrete types of contexts of situation. A type of context of situation is then actualized in a real and tangible situation, enabling the emergence of specific social interactions and communicative events. However, this transformation from abstract to concrete does not occur semiotically independently. As we have stressed, this process of actualization, or instantiation, is mediated through culturally accepted language use that aligns with shared social norms.

At the language stratum, registers, serving as more abstract patterns of instantiation emanating from the system pole, represent the contexts of situation, thereby facilitating their practical instantiations. They achieve this through the means of varying functional language use (i.e., the metafunctions of language), sourced from the extensive language system embedded in the given culture. These abstract patterns of registers within this cline function as a sub-system, providing the sub-potential for meaning-making resources—much akin to the language system as a whole—for specific types of

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[66] Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 28.

text.[67] This enables the realization or construal of the most concrete and specific context

of situation through correspondingly more focused functional language use in a text.

Further elaborating on the interrelationship between register and text within the

framework of SFL, it is imperative to acknowledge that each text, as a realization of a

specific context of situation, inherently possesses the attributes of a register in its own

cline of instantiation. In simpler terms, when a text semiotically constructs a specific

situation, it essentially draws upon pre-established textual patterns, thereby instantiating

one or more registers. Therefore, every text, irrespective of its complexity or the variety

of sociocultural and situational variables it embodies, has its own register.[68] Second, a

register serves as a repository of meaning-making resources, possessing distinctive

semantic and lexicogrammatical potentials that are intrinsically tied to its situational

context. To put it more explicitly, a register is characterized by its register-specific

semiotic potentials, which include both a constrained set of semantic options and a

constrained set of lexicogrammatical manifestations.[69] These register-specific semantic

and register-specific structural potentials are instantiated within a text depending on the

immediate context of situation to which the text is responsive.[70] Third, within the

intricate interplay between system and instance, as well as between activation and

realization, the register serves as a semiotic mediator. In this role, it facilitates the

actualization of abstract sociocultural structures into tangible, real-life situational

contexts through situationally-bound linguistic realizations in a text.[71] To be more

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[67] Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 29; Hasan, "Description of Context," 13.
[68] Hasan, "Description of Context," 4; Bartlett and Bowcher, "Contexts," 251.
[69] Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 4; Bartlett and O'Grady, "Introduction," 6.
[70] Hasan, "Description of Context," 7. See also Land, *2 Corinthians*, 4n9.
[71] Taverniers, "Modelling Interfaces," 302; Shore, "Register," 71.

precise, register operationalizes the text-type conventions and potential semantic-grammatical configurations, enabling them to be sensitive to, and reflective of, a specific context of situation. Through this mediation, register enables a text to navigate the complex systemic network of semantic and lexicogrammatical choices, making it attuned to both the generic text type it falls under and the specific situational context it aims to realize or construe.

Consequently, understanding the mediating role of register within these systemic and functional interactions opens new avenues for dissecting how meaning-making resources are selectively deployed in an individual, single text that draws on such register(s), in congruence with specific contextual demands. In the case of the texts of First and Second Thessalonians, these serve as pertinent examples of how texts instantiate specific registers, drawing upon textual types that were culturally accepted and shared at the time of their composition. To delve into the nuanced textual relationships between these two letters and the resulting situational dynamics reflected in them, it is imperative for analysts to ascertain what type of register-specific semiotic potentials—both semantic and structural, or lexicogrammatical—is instantiated in each Thessalonian text.

If a delicate register analysis of each Thessalonian text suggests that these two texts instantiate different registers, the view that these letters were written by different authors might gain credence.[72] This is predicated on a fundamental assumption that

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[72] Certainly, the idea that the same speakers or writers must consistently employ identical registers with the same recipients across all human cultures and forms of communication is neither a universally acknowledged nor a practical assumption in the realm of human interaction. Indeed, the same communicative partners may employ a range of registers even within the same physical setting, contingent upon semiotically dictated contextual demands. It is therefore not an absolute certainty that divergent or convergent registers in First and Second Thessalonians conclusively indicate different or identical authorship. We cannot dogmatically determine the authorship of the texts in question solely based on

underlies most arguments from critics: the two epistolary texts diverge substantially in

their ideational and interpersonal dimensions. Consequently, these texts are understood to

realize different types of contexts of situation, despite the presence of the same figures as

the implied authors and recipients as well as the addressing of similar topics and issues.

This makes it highly unlikely that the same author would have sent letters in such

different registers to the same recipients within a short period of time. In contrast, if a

register analysis of the two Thessalonian texts suggests that they consistently instantiate

the same register, particularly in terms of almost unchanged ideational and interpersonal

dimensions, and thereby realize or construe consistent situation type in the realms of field

and tenor then the burden of proof would fall upon those who posit the view of different

authorship.

Likewise, if critics can theoretically substantiate their premise that the two

Thessalonian texts employ a significant amount of identical lexicogrammatical elements

and structures, despite existing under differing field and tenor parameters and thus

realizing different ideational and interpersonal semantic constructs, then the argument for

2 Thessalonians as a pseudonymous work imitating 1 Thessalonians would be

strengthened. On the other hand, if both First and Second Thessalonian texts draw upon

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whether their registers are identical or different. This study's focus on register in assessing the authorship of First and Second Thessalonians derives from the underlying assumptions prevalent in most arguments against Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians. These arguments posit that significant internal contradictions exist between the two letters in addressing eschatological ideas (in the ideational dimension), enacting personal interactions (in the interpersonal dimension), and crafting the texts themselves (in the textual dimension). According to this line of reasoning, it would be unlikely for the same author, Paul, to employ such disparate or contradictory registers when writing to the same Thessalonian recipients within a short period of time. Given this unique scholarly landscape, the present study deems the congruence or divergence in linguistic register between First and Second Thessalonians as a pivotal criterion in addressing the contested issue of their authorship. In other words, from a linguistic perspective, the contentions of those who reject Pauline authorship essentially assert that a difference in register between First and Second Thessalonians must indicate divergent authorship. This study attempts to dig into the very foundation of that claim: whether the two Thessalonian texts indeed differ in register.

the same register, sharing semantic and structural potentials, yet each text, in its own right, displays unique patterns and characteristics due to the individual lexicogrammatical choices made within the constraints of that shared register, then the view advocating different authorship may be called into question. Additionally, the mode analysis of each Thessalonian text could more explicitly measure the degree of similarity or dissimilarity in lexicogrammatical choices between the two than any cursory observations. Should such similarities be found, the analysis could then determine in a more systematic manner whether these arise from shared register-specific semantic and structural potentials or result from mechanically verbatim structural and semantic mimicry of 1 Thessalonians in 2 Thessalonians.

Analyzing Registers of First and Second Thessalonians

In order to discern the registers instantiated within the Thessalonian texts, a meticulous examination of the linguistic elements actually used in them, along with their corresponding semantic categories, is indispensable. This analytical scrutiny aims to identify what type of context of situation each Thessalonian text realizes by means of distinct semantic and lexicogrammatical choices. In so doing, it may illuminate the ideas and experiences these texts construe, the interactional dynamics they enact, and the processes they facilitate for textual coherence and organization. Examining the metafunctional implications inherent in the linguistic choices of the Thessalonian texts requires analytical frameworks grounded in the Greek language system. Therefore, the register analysis of the Thessalonian correspondence will be conducted according to a schema specifically modelled for elucidating how the Greek language system orchestrates such meaning-making operations.

Ideational Meanings in First and Second Thessalonians

The field of discourse is discerned through linguistic elements that realize ideational meanings, thereby being recognized as one of the immediate contextual parameters that profoundly influence how the ideas and experiences at hand are conveyed and progressed in the discourse. Thus, identification of the field within any given text necessitates a detailed examination of related semantic and lexicogrammatical structures, including but not limited to, valency patterns, key lexical items, and their semantic roles. Two critical linguistic mechanisms indispensable for realizing the field are lexical choices and the transitivity network. Lexis furnishes a robust lexicon that encapsulates the intricate facets of the subject matter under discussion. The transitivity network lays down a structural scaffold that facilitates the encoding of diverse processes, participants, and contextual circumstances. Together, these mechanisms engender a more nuanced and exhaustive comprehension of the field of discourse.[73]

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[73] Halliday suggests another metafunctional category of language that establishes interconnections of meaning representations as an added layer of lexicogrammatical components vital for realizing ideational meaning. In this theoretical context, logico-semantic relations are articulated through taxis—comprising hypotaxis and parataxis—which facilitate various mechanisms such as projection for the representation of sayings or thoughts, apposition for the elaboration of similar clausal units, and extension for the sequential arrangement of equal units. Furthermore, enhancement by subordinate units is adequately addressed. As a result, the ideational metafunction in SFL divides into two salient subfunctions: the experiential metafunction, regulated by lexis and the transitivity network, and the logical metafunction, encapsulated by the notion of taxis. The logical metafunction also covers ranks from groups to clause complexes, enriching the scope of taxis and related mechanisms. However, the logical metafunction is often confused with the textual metafunction in its organization of various meanings in a coherent text form. Depending on the particular aspect of "logical" under discussion, the categorization may differ. Specifically, if the focus is on the logical progression of discursive elements, it is pertinent to the logical metafunction, which operates under the broader umbrella of the ideational metafunction; conversely, if the emphasis is on the logical organization or structure of the discourse, it would more appropriately relate to the textual metafunction. This study does not exhaustively address the complexities inherent in the logical metafunction as it relates to the ideational metafunction since the associated lexicogrammatical mechanisms are exceedingly intricate and too numerous for comprehensive treatment here. If necessary, however, for the specific purpose of analyzing the progression of discourse in the Thessalonians correspondence, this study will focus on the structural relationships between syntactic units, as manifested, for example, in hypotaxis or parataxis between clauses. See Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 20–22. For a detailed discussion of the logical metafunction of language and related

Lexical Choices

The term "lexis," also known as the vocabulary of a language, is pivotal within the

ideational metafunction of language, especially regarding its contribution to articulating

the field of discourse in the most specific and intricate manners through the choice of

exact lexical components that capture subtle implications and cultural connotations. Lexis

provides a rich inventory of lexical items that serve as the building blocks for conveying

the semantic complexities of a particular subject matter.[74] The selection of specific

lexical items is not merely a matter of stylistic preference but a meaningful choice that

contributes to shaping and delivering the intrinsic characteristics of the field. For

instance, when constructing a clause that identifies a process or action, careful selection

from the lexicon is required to choose the appropriate verb and its associated

participants.[75] This paradigmatic choice of a specific verb from a set of possible

alternatives forms an integral part of the clause's structure, shaping both its structure and

function within the discourse. In this regard, Ruqaiya Hasan has articulated that lexis can

be considered as the most delicate grammar within the lexicogrammar, highlighting the

importance of lexical selection and configuration in meaning-making processes.[76]

Transitivity Network

While lexical choices offer a rich tapestry of terms that serve to constitute the most

delicate layer in meaning-making processes, the transitivity network furnishes the

grammatical framework that organizes these lexical elements. In the context of the

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lexicogrammatical elements and structures, refer to Reed, *Philippians*, 90–93. See also Yoon, *Galatians*,
75n26.
[74] Porter, "Ideational Metafunction," 148–52.
[75] Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 94–95.
[76] Hasan, "Grammarian's Dream," 184.

ideational metafunction of language, the transitivity network operates as a structural

mechanism that categorizes and prioritizes various processes and integrates them with

corresponding participants and circumstantial elements.[77] This not only complements but

also extends the role of lexis, shifting the focus from individual lexical selection to the

incorporation of these terms into broader grammatical configurations.

In SFL, the transitivity network categorizes three major process types that are

most commonly represented when human experience is linguistically construed: material,

mental, and relational processes. These are complemented by three sub-categories—

behavioural, verbal, and existential—that are less commonly represented but hold equal

significance, as they enrich the network by capturing specialized actions and

relationships, thereby contributing to a more nuanced and comprehensive analytical

framework.[78] First, material processes refer to actions or events that have tangible

outcomes in the external world. These processes typically involve two types of

participants: an Actor, who carries out the action, and often a Goal, which is affected by

the action. In the Greek New Testament, such verbs as πορεύομαι, εἰσέρχομαι, βάλλω,

ἀφίημι, ἀνοίγω illustrate a material process. Second, mental processes are those that deal

with perception, cognition, and emotion. These processes usually involve a Sensor, who

experiences the internal state, and a Phenomenon, which is the entity being sensed or

thought about, as related participants. Verbs such as οἶδα and φοβέομαι stand as

illustrations of mental processes. Third, relational processes serve to identify or attribute

characteristics to entities. These processes generally include participants such as a

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[77] Porter, "Dialect and Register," 207.
[78] Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 220–24. See also Reed, *Philippians*, 65–70; Martín-Asensio, *Acts of the Apostles*, 93–94; Yoon, *Galatians*, 91.

Carrier, which holds some attribute, and an Attribute, which describes the characteristic

being assigned. Such verbs as εἰμί and ὑπάρχω serve as representative instances of

relational processes. In addition to these common types, there are less prevalent yet

equally significant subcategories. Behavioural processes refer to physiological or

psychological actions and usually involve a Behaver, as in προσεύχομαι and φάγω. Verbal

processes involve acts of communication, usually between a Sayer and a Receiver,

exemplified by the verb λέγω and ἀποκρίνομαι. Finally, existential processes denote the

existence or emergence of an entity, encapsulated by the Greek verb γίνομαι.

Given the morphologically rich linguistic system of Greek, the classification of

process types should also be approached by examining the verbal aspect as a distinct

semantic category morphologically encoded in the tense-forms. This is because, in the

Greek language system, the verbal aspect serves to realize semantically in a specific

morphological variant the language user's intentional and deliberate subjective choice of

how to conceptualize a process.[79] Within this systemic framework, the Greek verbal

aspect encompasses three primary semantic categories: perfective, imperfective, and

stative. These distinctions are recognized through grammatical, or morphological,

categories commonly known as the tense-forms.[80]

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[79] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 88; Porter, *Idioms*, 20–21; Reed, *Philippians*, 64.

[80] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 107–108. With the advent of modern linguistics and the discovery of numerous manuscripts, scholarly examination of Greek verb tenses in the New Testament has evolved significantly. As a result, it is now gradually accepted that tense-forms do not convey an absolute temporal meaning, sparking a scholarly division on whether to conceptualize this feature either as *Aktionsart* (a kind of action) or as aspect. Moreover, even among those who endorse an aspectual understanding, debates persist. Some scholars, including but not limited to Buist M. Fanning and Constantine R. Campbell, propose that Greek verb tenses primarily signify aspectual meanings but can also accommodate temporal nuances under particular contexts. In contrast, Porter maintains that the morphology of Greek verb tenses is strictly aspectual. For the purposes of this study, the stance aligns more closely with that of Porter, for several reasons. First, while Fanning and Campbell make valuable contributions to the field, their analyses may benefit from a more comprehensive systemic evaluation, a particular strength in Porter's methodological approach. Grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics, Porter offers a more robust and

The perfective aspect, as the meaning of the aorist tense-form, signifies the language user's conceptualization of the action as a complete and undifferentiated process, irrespective of its actual temporal characteristics—be they momentary or lasting a significant length of time. The imperfective aspect, which is the meaning of the present and imperfect tense-forms, represents the action as conceived by the language user to be in progress; that is, its internal structure is seen as unfolding.[81] The stative aspect, which is the meaning of the perfect and pluperfect tense-forms, signifies that the action is conceived by the language user as reflecting a given state of affairs—often complex—regardless of whether this state has arisen from some antecedent action or implies any continued duration.[82] Within the framework of this Greek aspect system, the future tense-form is not fully grammaticalized in terms of aspect; rather, it is morphologically associated with mood-form and its semantic realization, attitude. Consequently, the future form incorporates the semantic feature of expectation as its meaning and is therefore classified as a non-aspectual verb form.[83]

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thorough examination of the Greek language system. Second, while Fanning and Campbell offer an interconnected view of morphological form and semantic function, Porter maintains a more defined distinction, thus providing greater clarity for exegetical tasks. Third, Porter's theory is unique in that it extends the understanding of aspect to the level of whole discourse, an area not yet fully explored by Fanning and Campbell. Beyond these points of alignment with the current study, Porter's approach offers unique strengths. It is both internally consistent and methodologically sound, providing a coherent and less contradictory framework for analyzing Greek texts. Additionally, his model allows for a text-driven analysis sensitive to the original authors' linguistic choices, thereby enriching its applicability for both exegetical and hermeneutical tasks. Finally, by engaging with interdisciplinary perspectives and incorporating insights from general linguistics and discourse analysis, Porter's theory gains an additional layer of depth and robustness. See Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*. For the most recent scholarly dialogues among Porter, Fanning, and Campbell concerning the Greek verbal aspect, with a specific focus on the perfect tense-form, consolidated into a single volume, consult Campbell et al., *Perfect Storm*.

[81] The aspectual meaning of the imperfect tense-form is differentiated from that of the present tense-form by its additional semantic feature of remoteness within this imperfective aspect category. Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 207.

[82] Like the imperfect tense-form within the imperfective aspectual semantic category, the aspectual meaning of the pluperfect differs from that of the perfect tense-form by its semantic feature of remoteness. Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 289.

[83] Regarding such semantic trait derived from the future tense-form, Porter explains, "The future

Building upon our comprehension of the functions that Greek verbal aspects serve—specifically, their capacity to enable language users to conceptualize processes in particular ways—it becomes instructive to explore their alignment with various types of texts. This alignment is not fortuitous but rather systematic, guided by the text's inherent nature. The chosen dominant verbal aspect not only reflects but also enhances the text's focus, aiding in the strategic construction of its mainline. This, in turn, provides a coherent and effective articulation of the text's targeted experiential spheres. In narrative text types, the mainline—representing the central events or key points of the text—is often maintained through the use of the perfective aspect, specifically expressed in the aorist tense-form.[84] This is aligned with the perfective aspect's function of conveying actions as complete, thereby efficiently moving the narrative along. This aspect serves to string together significant episodes or events, creating an unfolding storyline. Conversely, in discursive or expositional text types, it is the imperfective aspect, particularly realized through the present tense-form, that governs the mainline of discourse.[85] Given the imperfective aspect's role in highlighting ongoing processes, it is ideal for sustaining arguments, exploring theories, or explaining phenomena in detail. It allows the writer or speaker to delve deeply into subjects, facilitating a thorough discussion or exposition. For both narrative and discursive texts, other aspects act as subordinated elements, reflecting background or supporting material. In relation to this matter, David I. Yoon posits that

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form is morphologically related to the subjunctive, as seen in the use of the sigma and similar vowel configurations in earlier Greek" (*Idioms*, 43). The εἰμί verb is notably aspectually vague, thereby not offering a meaningful choice of aspect when employed independently. However, in periphrastic verbal constructions that involve the coupling of a participle with εἰμί, the participle contributes the semantic feature of verbal aspect to the construction. Within this construction, εἰμί operates as an auxiliary verb. See Porter, *Idioms*, 45; Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 97.

[84] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 92–93; Porter, *Idioms*, 23–24.

[85] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 102–108.

one could argue that while these subsidiary layers are integral for the full comprehension of the text, it is the mainline that essentially encapsulates the crux of the discourse, encapsulating its primary ideational focus or central argument.[86] The mainline, governed by the dominant verbal aspect, effectively concentrates the pivotal ideas or events that the text aims to represent.

Concerning the participants in the transitivity network, grammatical voice plays a crucial role in clarifying the extent of their engagement in different processes. Voice-forms serve as markers for the semantic category of causality, particularly highlighting the function that the grammatical subject performs in relation to a given process.[87] The active voice essentially emphasizes the agent or initiator as the causal force behind an action, assigning them the role of the grammatical subject in the sentence. Conversely, the passive voice in Greek highlights the object or recipient of an action as the grammatical subject, without making overt causality the central focus. It is often used to suggest indirect causality, although specific constructions can imbue it with more explicit causative meanings. The middle voice in Greek provides a more intricate understanding through the incorporation of the ergative concept. It signals that the causality is internal to the action or process itself, often portraying scenarios where the subject acts upon itself or where causality is inherently part of the action.[88]

In particular, Greek cases likely address the relationship between participants and processes in the transitivity network more directly and immediately, serving to clarify the complexities inherent in the question of "who did what to whom." These grammatical

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[86] Yoon, *Galatians*, 94.
[87] Porter, *Idioms*, 62.
[88] Porter, *Idioms*, 63–70. See also Porter, "Did Paul Baptize Himself?" 100–101.

cases provide critical semantic markers for understanding the various roles that

participants occupy in relation to the action or state described.[89] In the SFL framework,

cases are not merely treated as four or five individual categories (depending on whether

the vocative is treated as an independent fifth category) in isolation. Indeed, rather than

being isolated entities, these cases are often conceptualized as part of a system network,

interlinked in a hierarchical structure specifically designed to shape meaningful

relationships between participants within the discourse. Porter categorizes these cases

into two broad types: nominative and non-nominative.[90] When applying his concepts at a

participatory level, primary participants are usually denoted by the nominative case and

often serve as the subject of the clause. Conversely, secondary participants are signified

by non-nominative cases and typically assume secondary roles in the event or state being

described.[91] This specialized terminology finds a suitable correspondence with Halliday's

classification, particularly when one conceptualizes the Actor as a primary participant

and the Goal as a secondary participant.[92] Upon examining the patterns of who or what

serves as primary and secondary participants in the entirety of a given text, insights may

be gleaned into participant relationships in the instigator and recipient involvement, as

well as the distribution of actions or states. Specifically, one can discern who actively

initiates or undergoes processes and who or what is the object or target of such actions or

states. This layered analysis enriches our understanding of the underlying ideational

meanings within the discourse.

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[89] For a comparable methodology that scrutinizes participants within the transitivity network, taking into account the Greek case system, consult Yoon, *Galatians*, 94–95.

[90] Porter, "Prominence," 65–66.

[91] Yoon, *Galatians*, 95.

[92] Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 74–82.

In the transitivity network, circumstances act as complementary facets, enriching the semantic layers of clauses by supplementing processes and participants. Circumstances are often grammaticalized through prepositional or adverbial word groups, thereby providing specific locational, temporal, or qualitative dimensions to the clause.[93] Although they are not strictly necessary, circumstances add depth to the understanding of a clause by situating processes and participants within broader contexts. Circumstances can be sorted into distinct categories, each contributing to the overall meaning in unique ways.[94] These include (1) extent and location, which cover both spatial and temporal domains (e.g., ἐν Γαλιλαίᾳ for spatial and ἡμέρας τρεῖς for temporal); (2) manner, which encompasses means, quality, and comparison (e.g., μετὰ χαρᾶς for means, ἐν σιωπῇ for quality, and ὡς πρόβατα for comparison); (3) cause, which involves aspects like reason, purpose, and behalf (e.g., διὰ τὸ ὄνομα for reason, εἰς σωτηρίαν for purpose, and ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν for behalf); (4) accompaniment, which identifies additional entities participating in the process (e.g., σὺν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις or μετὰ Μαρίας); (5) matter, which relates to the subject matter at hand (e.g., περὶ τῆς φιλαδελφίας); and (6) role, which delineates the specific functions or capacities that entities assume in a given process (e.g., ὡς τέκνα φωτὸς).

Interpersonal Meanings in First and Second Thessalonians

Within the methodological framework of SFL's register analysis, the tenor parameter is identified through the metafunctional use of language with particular emphasis on

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[93] Reed, *Philippians*, 63.
[94] See Reed, *Philippians*, 70–76.

interpersonal dimensions. Such linguistic metafunction is realized primarily through two specific lexicogrammatical structures: the interpersonal participant configuration, which includes the precise lexical identification of participants within the discourse, along with the grammatical structuring of roles associated with these participants; and the codification of grammatical mood-forms vis-à-vis their corresponding attitudinal semantics.

Participant Configuration

From the perspective of the field of discourse, participants are principally treated as entities associated with particular process types. When considered through the lens of tenor and interpersonal semantic properties, participants are not merely representational entities in the text but rather social actors whose roles and relationships are intricately woven into the discourse. Regarding the roles and relations of participants activated by the tenor parameter, Halliday delineates two categories of social roles that are essential to understanding discourse: extralinguistic roles and intra-linguistic roles. Extralinguistic roles, also known as first-order social roles, are established independently of language but are often represented and clarified both in and by language. Conversely, intra-linguistic roles, also termed second-order social roles, are constructed and understood strictly within the boundaries of language.[95]

Informed by Halliday's classification of social roles and relations within the scope of discourse analysis, first-order social roles are the underlying cultural, institutional, or historical identities that participants bring into the communicative act. While these roles

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[95] Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 31–33. See also Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 90.

provide the foundational backdrop, it is the second-order roles that become central in construing how these entities are linguistically manifested in the text. That is to say, second-order roles are pivotal in specifying and enriching the first-order roles within the particular contours of the discourse. Here, the focus shifts to how the text linguistically represents or construes the participants, defining them not just by their inherent characteristics but also by their relational dynamics within the discourse.

In the exploration of how texts articulate their discourse participants, giving due attention to both primary and secondary participants is vital for a comprehensive understanding of the text. As previously mentioned, within the confines of discourse's field analysis, primary and secondary participants are delineated using Greek grammatical cases—specifically distinguished into nominative and non-nominative cases. Nevertheless, as the analysis shifts its focus towards the discourse's tenor, the inquiry transcends the mere structural identification of participants. Instead, it investigates their complex roles as social actors intimately woven into the fabric of the text.[96] Primary participants are the central figures or entities that act as the driving forces behind the text's main actions, initiatives, or arguments. They are deeply involved in the unfolding of events or the development of negotiations, exerting a substantial influence on the overarching interpersonal moves in the text. In contrast, secondary participants are figures or entities that play a more peripheral role. While they may be important for the progression of dialogues or arguments, they do not command the same level of conceptual significance as do primary participants. Secondary participants often function to support, elaborate upon, or contrast with the relational dynamics and actions enacted

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[96] Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 173.

by the primary participants, thereby enriching the discourse without necessarily steering its principal direction.[97]

The examination of primary and secondary participants and their intricate relationships is accomplished through multiple approaches. One such approach involves identifying specific lexemes that function as indicators for these participants. These lexical choices include overt references to primary participants and extend to secondary participants as well. Serving to identify and establish foundational roles, these lexemes delineate the dynamics of interactions among participants in both explicit and delicate ways.[98] However, it is crucial to note that the identification of discourse participants is not invariably tied to the use of the same lexemes throughout the text. Rather, a variety of lexical items may be employed to denote a single participant within the discourse. For example, in 1 Tim 1:2, Timothy is identified by his name, but Paul also employs other lexical items such as "man of God" to address him, as seen in 1 Tim 6:11.[99] Consequently, tracking the specific lexemes employed to denote a given participant within a text can provide substantial insights into both the diversity and frequency of terms used to refer to that particular participant. Through the examination of semantic

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[97] Generally, in Paul's letters, primary participants include Paul, in his role as the letter writer, and the Christian communities to whom his letters are addressed. Secondary participants encompass a broader range of figures and concepts, from divine figures like God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit to other human individuals like Phoebe, the deaconess of the Cenchreae church, in Rom 16:1, those Paul wishes to greet in Rom 16, or those who are idle in 2 Thess 3. They also encompass specific institutions, such as local church organizations in Achaea or Macedonia, the Jewish religious establishment, as well as Roman civic authorities, alongside abstract or personified concepts like "the Law," "sin," and "death." These secondary participants are often known to or shared with the primary participants; otherwise, the author makes these known to the recipients through the text.

[98] For this matter, see Porter, "How Do We Define Pauline Social Relations?" 25–26.

[99] For a comprehensive discourse analysis of 1 Timothy, grounded in the principles of SFL, refer to Reed, "To Timothy or Not?"

patterns in the lexemes chosen to identify a participant, one can ascertain the text's evaluative perspective towards that particular individual.

Transitioning from lexical analysis, a detailed examination of grammatical structures related to discourse participants provides enhanced insight into the sophisticated mechanisms that govern their interactions. The Greek case system furnishes a grammatical resource for shaping these interpersonal relationships among discourse participants. In Rom 16, for example, Paul introduces individuals he wishes to greet by explicitly mentioning their names. He also crafts grammatical relationships between these individuals and his Roman audience by judiciously employing these names as complements within the clauses, primarily in the accusative cases. This grammatical structuring serves to underscore Paul's strategic methodology for fostering interactional connections, directing his audience to engage in particular interactions with those whom he introduces.[100] However, it is crucial to underscore that the grammatical cases assigned to discourse participants do not invariably adhere to patterns that are solely determined by their designated roles within the text. The varied distribution of primary participants across different grammatical cases undermines a simplistic assumption that the nominative case is the exclusive domain of the speaker or writer, while the dative or accusative cases are reserved solely for recipients. In a similar vein, the grammatical positions of secondary participants are not confined to the grammatical cases typically associated with their roles. Across the text, discourse participants can appear in a myriad of grammatical cases. Examining the distribution of varied grammatical cases and identifying the specific participants to whom these cases are attributed within the text

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[100] See Porter, *Romans*, 32, 34.

may elucidate overarching patterns that shape participant roles and relationships, as well as construct a complex network of interpersonal dynamics among them.

Grammatical person serves as another pivotal mechanism for identifying relationships among discourse participants.[101] The Greek person system operates as a semiotic meaning-making resource to delineate the varying levels of involvement among the participants: in general, the first person includes the author, the second person refers to those addressed by the author, and the third person encompasses those outside the realm of direct personal interaction.[102] In relation to the notion of primary and secondary participants within a text, first- and second person typically signify primary participants in the discourse, whereas third person often demarcates secondary participants. Nevertheless, in the letters attributed to Paul, the employment of grammatical person defies rigidity. He employs a diverse range of grammatical persons for self-reference, from the first person singular and plural to occasional instances of the third person singular. This versatility in Paul's use of grammatical person serves as an indicator of his varied strategy for self-reference. This, in turn, encourages analysts to explore more deeply the situational factors that influence his choice of differing grammatical persons when referring to himself.[103]

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[101] Porter, "Register," 222–23.

[102] Porter, *Idioms*, 76–77.

[103] In relation to the Thessalonian correspondence, such fluidity in Paul's use of grammatical person necessitates an investigation into the situational factors, making it important to understand why Paul, the implied author, opts for the first person singular at certain, perhaps abrupt, junctures while predominantly employing the first person plural (including Silvanus and Timothy) for self-reference. Even in using the first person plural, Paul uses it interchangeably when referring to himself, including others with him. As the most dominant case, he employs the first person plural when referencing himself, Silvanus, and Timothy together. In another instance, he employs the same person-form, including the recipients alongside him. Moreover, Paul sometimes extends this inclusivity to all Christian believers in a general sense when using the first person plural. In 2 Cor 12:2–5, there is also an arguable case, relevant to this issue, for third person self-reference by Paul.

Moreover, the concentrated employment of specific grammatical persons at designated junctures in the text serves to highlight its interactional thread. For example, a portion where the first- and second-person forms are consistently used may signal a pivotal moment where interactions among primary discourse participants become particularly salient. On the opposite end, a portion predominantly featuring the third person may imply that secondary participants occupy a noteworthy role within that segment of the text. This strategic arrangement, rooted in the choice of grammatical persons, enables readers to navigate the participant patterns of the discourse more effectively.[104]

Mood-Forms and Attitudinal Semantics

In the Greek language system, mood-forms serve as a grammatical resource that allows language users to articulate specific viewpoints concerning the relationships between verbal actions and the realities they signify. The mood-forms thus express the language user's attitude towards the event in focus.[105] From the standpoint of the systemic network of Greek mood-forms and attitudes, Porter categorizes mood-forms into two distinct types based on the specific semantic traits they grammaticalize: indicative and non-indicative mood-forms. The former specializes in the grammaticalization of assertion, whereas the latter focuses on projecting hypothetical or potential scenarios. The semantic feature of projection is further elucidated upon close examination of the related mood-forms: imperative, subjunctive, optative, and the future tense-form.[106]

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[104] Porter, *Romans*, 32.
[105] Porter, *Idioms*, 50.
[106] Porter, *Idioms*, 50.

The indicative mood-form is employed to grammaticalize an assertive attitude, serving as a means to establish a particular condition as corresponding to reality. This mood-form thus serves as a grammatical medium enabling the language user to represent the situation with which they engage as factual or real.[107] This signifies that the assertive attitude conveyed using the indicative mood-form does not necessarily equate to an absolute, unequivocal fact in objective reality. This point is substantiated by the fact that even statements presenting what might be considered non-absolute truths can be articulated through the employment of the indicative mood-form in human communication. Examples from the Bible provide ample evidence of this phenomenon, including figures such as Satan, false prophets, or opponents of the apostles, all of whom often employ the indicative mood-form to make assertive statements that may not correspond to objective reality. This is also observed in the use of figurative language, which may not be factual in a literal sense, yet still carry deep cultural or spiritual significance. The assertive attitude can thus be conceptualized as a relationship between the language user employing the indicative mood-form and their subjective perception of reality.[108] In other words, the indicative mood-form functions to realize a straightforward assertion about the language user's view of reality, irrespective of any factual underpinning.

The register analysis upon which this study is based does not seek to verify the factual accuracy of the assertive statements themselves contained within the text. Instead, its primary objective is to examine the specific conditions under which the text assumes an assertive posture in articulating a particular view of reality. The instances in which the

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[107] Porter, *Idioms*, 51.
[108] Reed, *Philippians*, 82.

author of the Thessalonian correspondence directly makes assertive statements using the

indicative mood-form about the recipients' behaviours, understanding, conditions, roles,

states, or reputation are highly informative. Such information could be crucial for

understanding the author's evaluative stance toward the recipients and, thereby, the

interactional dynamics between them.[109]

Within the category of non-indicative mood-forms, the imperative mood-form

serves a specific function: it grammaticalizes the directive attitude by providing a

linguistic means to direct someone's actions, rooted in the projection within the mind of

the language user.[110] The use of the subjunctive mood-form involves constructing a

hypothetical realm that has the potential to become real and might even exist currently.

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[109] The relationship between the Greek indicative mood-form and its inherent assertive attitude is central to understanding its role in speech functions, particularly the statement and the question. Mood-forms and attitudes work together to realize speech functions, which is closely aligned with Halliday's delineation of the two types of speech role, namely "giving" and "demanding," as well as with the two types of commodity exchanged: "goods-and-services" and "information." Within the framework of SFL, speech functions fall under the umbrella of the interpersonal metafunction, encompassing the statement (giving information), the question (demanding information), the offer (giving goods-and-services), and the command (demanding goods-and-services). Regarding my own research focus, it is pertinent to note that although speech functions are essential for a comprehensive register analysis, they are not my primary objective when studying the Thessalonian correspondence. This reservation is rooted in the limited capacities of Halliday's delineation of speech functions to capture the nuanced evaluative and interpersonal aspects unique to these ancient texts. The correlation between speech functions and both the mood-form and attitude is not consistently fixed; for instance, the indicative mood-form could potentially be employed in a command, or a question could bear subtle shades of a command. In other words, the mood-forms' relation to the speech functions represents typical but not absolute usage. Moreover, it should not be assumed that the speech functions themselves signify the tone or evaluative orientation, including whether the author's disposition is affectionate or harsh (In this regard, the claim by critics that there is a difference in tone and interpersonal dynamics between First and Second Thessalonians due to an increased prevalence of commands in the latter may lack validity). We also confront the issue of diachronic incongruence as we do not have access to native speakers of Koine Greek in which the first-century Thessalonian letters were composed. Therefore, it is challenging to ascertain with precision any congruities or discordances between the mood-form, attitude, and their typical realization in speech functions of the ancient Greek language. In light of these considerations, my focus remains on the lexicogrammatical elements inherent in this mood-form and its semantic attitude. Regarding this matter, as Christopher D. Land remarks, "such interpersonal nuances are conveyed by the use of a particular wording in the context of a given situation" (*2 Corinthians*, 61). For an exploration of Halliday's conceptions of speech roles and functions, consult Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 135–39. For an in-depth examination specifically concerning speech functions within the Greek language, refer to Porter, "Systemic Functional Linguistics," 20–32.

[110] Porter, *Idioms*, 53–56.

However, it is introduced for scrutiny as a projection originating from the language user's thoughts, inviting contemplation. Therefore, the subjunctive mood-from grammaticalizes the projective attitude with no expectation of its fulfillment.[111] The optative mood-form encapsulates the semantic attribute of projective attitude, yet it does so with an added layer of conditional or contingent expectation of fulfillment.[112] As previously mentioned, the future tense-form does not completely encode aspectual features due to its morphological association with mood-forms, focusing instead on grammaticalizing the semantic trait of expectation. Though the future tense-form and the subjunctive mood-form frequently co-occur, particularly in conditional and relative clauses, the future form generally conveys an expectation of the action's realization compared to the subjunctive form.[113]

In the Thessalonian texts, it is observed that the author utilizes not only the indicative mood-form but also diverse non-indicative mood-forms as a sophisticated grammatical tool to encapsulate a projective attitude. This choice reveals much more than a simple assertive depiction of reality; it allows us to understand the author's inner cognitive landscape, specifically what he desires, expects, anticipates, envisages, or is apprehensive about the recipients, as well as the particular contextual elements or existential conditions that preoccupy his thoughts. Additionally, these non-assertive attitudes could serve as an invaluable indicator of the author's specific evaluative stance towards the recipients' current state. The author's projections can serve either as a corrective guide, indicating areas where the recipients are lacking or negligent, or as an

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[111] Porter, *Idioms*, 56–59. See also Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 250.
[112] Porter, *Idioms*, 59–61
[113] Porter, *Idioms*, 45.

aspirational prompt, building upon their existing competencies and encouraging further growth. If the latter scenario predominates in both letters, it would suggest that the author's level of trust in the recipients is substantial, and the degree to which he anticipates further accomplishments from them is quite elevated. Consequently, his attitude and expectations towards the readers are notably optimistic. This nuanced approach provides a comprehensive portrayal of the author's appraisal perspective towards the recipients, allowing for an enriched exploration of the interpersonal dynamics between them, far beyond what a solely assertive attitude could offer.

Textual Meanings in First and Second Thessalonians

Within the purview of SFL's register analysis, the textual meanings in a given text are activated by the mode of discourse. This mode is manifested through specific lexicogrammatical components that contribute to both textual coherency and thematic organization. Three key elements—cohesion, textual structure, and prominence—play an essential role in shaping these textual meanings. Cohesion serves as the glue that binds various elements of the text, fostering an integrated semantic landscape. Textual structure offers a thematic framework that governs the sequential arrangement of information, thereby guiding the reader through the discourse. Prominence, on the other hand, aids in the hierarchical organization of linguistic elements within the text, accentuating key focal points while relegating others to the background.

Cohesion

Cohesion refers to the lexicogrammatical relationships that bind various semantic components of a text, thereby contributing to its coherence. More specifically, cohesion

concerns itself with the lexicogrammatical devices that establish textual unity, while

coherence focuses on ensuring logical and conceptual consistency throughout the text.[114]

In the parlance of SFL, both cohesion and coherence are pivotal factors for the text in

establishing its textual meaning and aligning it with the context of situation in which it

functions. This means that the text's semantic elements are not arbitrary but are

purposefully structured to reflect and fulfill the specific demands of its situational

context. Halliday and Hasan delineate five distinct types of cohesive devices purposed for

interlinking various elements within a text: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction,

and lexical cohesion.[115]

Reference involves the utilization of linguistic elements like pronouns,

demonstratives, and comparatives to refer back to antecedent entities or forward to

subsequent elements within the text, thereby eliminating redundancy and facilitating

continuity.[116] This reference can be either endophoric (within the text) or exophoric

(outside the text).[117] Substitution is the practice of replacing a word or phrase with

another that refers to the same figure or entity but bears slightly different semantic

connotations that may enrich the interpretive depth of the text.[118] For instance, in Luke

13:31, Herod is initially referred to by his name, but immediately afterward, he is called a

"fox" by Jesus in v. 32, exemplifying the use of substitution wherein a specific word is

replaced with a symbolic term to convey deeper meaning. Ellipsis is characterized by the

intentional omission of certain elements that can be inferred from the co-textual or

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[114] Yoon, *Galatians*, 177.

[115] Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion*, 4; Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 72–85.

[116] Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion*, 31.

[117] Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion*, 33. See also Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 89.

[118] Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion*, 88.

contextual surroundings.[119] A statement, καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν οὕτως καὶ

ὑμεῖς in Col 3:13, serves as an example of ellipsis, where the verb ἐχαρίσατο is omitted in

the primary clause, yet cohesive ties are maintained. Conjunction employs connecting

devices like καί, ἀλλά, ἄρα, or γάρ to link a range of lexicogrammatical units, spanning

from individual words to word groups to clauses to clause complexes, and even to larger

groups of clause complexes, each of which constitutes a discrete semantic unit, thereby

facilitating coherence.[120] Lexical cohesion is established by employing semantically

interconnected lexemes, linked through synonyms, antonyms, hypernyms, or hyponyms,

all of which contribute collectively to the coherence and unity of the text.[121] Indeed, in

this context, the incorporation of clusters of lexemes organized into distinct semantic

domains reinforces the establishment of textual cohesion.[122]

Cohesive devices serve as invaluable tools for deciphering how distinct semantic

units at different linguistic levels are interconnected, contributing to the formation of a

larger and overarching semantic unit. The mentioned lexicogrammatical devices function

to facilitate such textual cohesion, ensuring a seamless and coherent flow of meaning

throughout the text. Consequently, the study of these cohesive mechanisms enriches our

comprehension of the distinct textual features inherent to each Thessalonian text,

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[119] Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion*, 143.
[120] Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion*, 226. For an effort to categorize and define the employment of Greek conjunctive devices across various textual levels, refer to Porter and O'Donnell, "Conjunctions, Clines and Levels of Discourse."
[121] Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion*, 284–86.
[122] For an in-depth exploration of how lexemes are systemically grouped based on semantic relationships, refer to Louw and Nida, *Greek–English Lexicon*. This reference work provides a comprehensive arrangement of New Testament words into semantic domains, each domain consisting of words related by sense relations. These are further organized into sub-domains and ordered in increasing degrees of specificity.

particularly in terms of how each text manifests its internal logical organization and semantic integrity.

Textual Structure

Textual structure refers to the unique organizational and compositional arrangement inherent within an individual text. A text's function is to construe its engaging situational context through the utilization of linguistic resources, specifically by instantiating a relevant register that deploys semantic and structural potentials. Yet, even within the bounds of the meaning-making resources provided by the register it instantiates, the text uniquely configures its textual structure using optional, discretionary structural elements in accordance with the characteristics of the specific situational context it construes.[123] This structure, flexibly organized to some degree, allows the text to effectively convey the meanings that metafunctionally realize the context of the situation with which it interacts. Thus, as Porter and Matthew Brook O'Donnell characterize it, every text possesses a unique textual structure, irrespective of its direct correlation with formal literary genres.[124]

Thematization stands as an analytical framework related to structuring information; it specifies the ways in which a language user organizes thematic elements

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[123] Initially, Hasan introduced the concept of Generic Structure Potential (GSP) as a means to outline the potential semantic and structural elements inherent within texts that share similar registers. These potentials consist of both obligatory and optional elements. GSP serves as a tool to distinguish both the mandatory and discretionary elements that comprise the generic structures across different register groupings, thus enabling individual texts to establish their own bespoke structural configurations. Nonetheless, due to the intrinsic ambiguities in defining genre in relation to register, as well as the risk of terminological confusion, Hasan subsequently refined her approach. She employs more nuanced descriptions like "register-specific semantic potential" and "register-specific structural potential" to articulate the distinct linguistic attributes inherent to a register. Hasan, "Text," 230. See also Land, *2 Corinthians*, 57n28.

[124] Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 88.

in a text and, through this process, provides an outline for the text's architecture.[125] This organizational strategy distinguishes between primary, thematic elements, and supplementary, rhematic elements, consequently shaping both the hierarchical arrangement and the complex organizational configuration of the text. As Yoon astutely observes, while the concept of "theme" is often linked to indicating the subject matter or what the text is about, within the context of the textual metafunction of language, it assumes a distinct function. Thematization focuses on the identification of thematic elements, rather than on what the thematic elements are about.[126] To clarify, thematization is concerned with identifying what constitutes the thematic elements of a text and differentiating the thematic elements from their supplementary, or rhematic, counterparts. The lexicogrammatical elements involved in thematization are manifested across multiple levels of linguistic structure, ranging from clauses and clause complexes to larger aggregations of semantically grouped clause complexes. In other words, thematization at different linguistic levels is realized in lexicogrammatically distinct ways, each serving varying functions in developing the organizational flow and shaping the structural framework of the text.[127]

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[125] In both general linguistics and SFL, "information structure" is often discussed in the context of thematic organization. This is closely aligned with the concept of textual structure, as defined by Porter and O'Donnell, which includes information structure and thematization among its elements. This study adopts the term, textual structure, to denote the structuring properties of an individual text, which emerge from thematization and information structuring processes. Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 88–90; Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 119–21.

[126] Yoon, *Galatians*, 118–19.

[127] Halliday's concept of theme-rheme plays an essential role in understanding how sentences in English are thematically organized. This framework also considers elements of information structure, including the notions of "given" and "new" information, as well as intonational patterns, in the identification and analysis of thematic elements. However, Halliday's conceptualization has limitations when applied to Greek written texts like First and Second Thessalonians. Most significantly, Halliday's approach is designed primarily for the English language and often relies on spoken discourse's intonation patterns. These English-oriented theme-rheme concepts and intonational cues are not readily applicable to the non-configurational Greek language, as well as to ancient written texts, thereby creating a methodological challenge. Furthermore, Halliday's theme-rheme model is mainly operational at the clause

Thematization at the level of the clause is realized by the first group constituent of the clause, irrespective of its grammatical classification as subject, predicator, complement, or adjunct. In their approach to clause level thematization, Porter and O'Donnell categorize the first group constituent of the clause as "prime" and refer to any following elements as "subsequent." In functional terms, the prime signifies "who or what the clause is focused upon," while the subsequent serves as "the development of the prime."[128] The examination of thematization undertaken at the clause level seeks to identify the point of departure of the clause's message, designated as prime, and to illuminate the subsequent contents that elaborate the prime, delineated as subsequent. However, when connecting words, such as καί, γάρ, διό, οὕτως, and ὅταν, among others, are positioned at the initial segment of the clause, they are not classified as prime and are therefore excluded from the analytical consideration of the thematization at the clause level. According to Porter and O'Donnell, these connecting words serve primarily to position and link the clauses in which they appear, rather than constituting integral components of the clausal thematic structure. These conjunctive devices fall under the purview of cohesion, rather than thematization at the clause level.[129]

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level. It does not easily extend to analyses that consider larger textual units comprising multiple clause complexes as a discrete semantic unit. For these reasons, this study adopts a revised scheme for thematization suited for ancient Greek written texts, as developed by Porter and O'Donnell. Their framework provides both a theoretical foundation and an analytical procedure for identifying thematic elements in Greek written texts. They also expand the concept of thematization beyond the clause level, considering groupings of clause complexes as a single, functional semantic unit. Notably, their thematization scheme includes distinct labels designated for each linguistic level's thematic elements, accommodating a more sophisticated and multilayered analysis of thematization. See Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 119–33; Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 102–104. See also Porter, "Prominence," 72–73; Dvorak and Walton, "Clause as Message," 31–85; Kurschner, *Revelation*, 59–64.

[128] Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 105.

[129] Porter and O'Donnell further stipulate that specific connecting words, such as ὅταν, ὅτε, and ὅπου, function not only as cohesive devices but also as indicators bearing contextual implications. This dual role prompts their examination within both the realm of cohesion and the broader cultural context. Therefore, these words are excluded from the thematization process at the clause level. Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 106.

As an example of prime and subsequent, οἴδατε γὰρ τίνας παραγγελίας ἐδώκαμεν ὑμῖν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ in 1 Thess 4:2, οἴδατε is the prime and τίνας παραγγελίας ἐδώκαμεν ὑμῖν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ is the subsequent. The mental process in the stative aspect, "knowing," serves as the point of departure and focus for the clause's message. The remainder of the clause elaborates on the content and attributes of the knowing.[130]

While the position of clause components serves as a lexicogrammatical marker for examining thematization at the clause level, participant involvement is a crucial indicator for discerning thematization strategies undertaken at the clause complex level. Porter and O'Donnell have introduced the labels of "theme" and "rheme" as key elements in the process of thematization at the clause complex level. Theme is defined as "the fully grammaticalized participant as the actor in a process chain."[131] According to Porter and O'Donnell, a process chain refers to a sequence of related verbal formations that share a common grammatical subject and contribute to a unified thematic development.[132] In this process chain, the grammatical subject of the theme is both aligned with and construed as the subject of the given process(es). This construct excludes subordinate clauses from identifying a theme in relation to this chain, meaning that although a fully grammaticalized participant appears in a subordinate clause, it is not the theme on which

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[130] Indeed, it holds true that a finite verb in Greek is monolectic, and thus, it does not necessitate a separate subject for specification. When delving into the examination of thematization at the clause level, if a verb finds itself positioned at the initial spot location within the clause, both the process and its participant can potentially be regarded as prime element. However, within the framework of thematization at the clause level, the strategic placement of a verb at the clause's outset accentuates the process itself, rather than highlighting the participant responsible for it. In the Greek verb system, when emphasizing the participant of the verb, language users would express the separate grammatical subject in nominal form. Considering this principle, οἴδατε as the prime element directs attention to the inherent "knowing" process itself, rather than emphasizing the sensor engaged in this mental process (in this case, the Thessalonian believers).

[131] Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 110.

[132] Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 110.

the process chain primarily operates. Only the participant explicitly grammaticalized in the nominative case in the primary clause is the theme governing the process chain.[133] Rheme, being associated with the notion of process chain, pertains to the group of clauses or clause complexes that revolve around the theme they further expound upon. Therefore, some clauses or clause complexes may lack a theme, meaning they do not contain a fully grammaticalized subject in the nominative case at the primary clause level. These structures are entirely rhematic, serving a secondary organizational function that further develops or elaborates the lexicogrammatical elements introduced as the theme.[134] In this regard, Porter and O'Donnell define rheme as "additional process information for the current actor," signifying that it continues the present process chain for the grammatically fully introduced theme they elaborate.[135] This continuation incorporates secondary or subordinate clauses and persists until the existing thematic unit concludes. This in turn gives rise to a subsequent thematic unit, focused on a newly introduced participant who is fully grammaticalized. In this way, the interaction between the governing theme and its related rhematic elements contributes to the creation of a distinct, focused thematic unit.

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[133] Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 110.

[134] Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 110. In discussing clause complexes that lack a thematic component, Prague School of Linguistics, often considered pioneers in the field of thematization, categorize these as themeless clauses, thereby characterizing them as solely rhematic. According to Jan Firbas, not all clauses or clause complexes possess a theme. In this case, they function as rhematic elements that are affixed to the designated thematic element. Firbas, "Has Every Sentence a Theme and a Rheme?" 106–8. In expanding upon this concept, Porter elucidates that theme-rheme relationships, initially examined at the level of clause complexes, can extend to encompass broader organizational structures. This extends beyond isolated sentences to larger, interconnected units. Clause complexes categorized as rheme, due to their absence of a thematic component, can work in conjunction with other rheme clause complexes to elaborate upon and support the theme to which they are affixed. Such aggregation forms a more extensive semantic and organizational unit, bearing interpretive significance. It implies that a configuration consisting of a thematic clause complex, augmented by affixed rheme clause complexes, has the potential to develop into a larger semantic construct, namely a thematic unit. This suggests a more advanced level of communicative organization that exceeds individual sentence boundaries. Porter, "Functional Letter Perspective," 14.

[135] Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 110.

Take, for example, Rom 15:5–12, which stands as a thematic unit. In this unit, the grammaticalized nominal word group ὁ θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως (v. 5) in the prime slot serves as the theme. This thematic unit culminates with the introduction of another new grammaticalized participant, ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος, in 15:13. The subsequent processes within this thematic unit operate as rhematic elements that form a process chain centred around the theme. In this thematic unit, the two primary clauses, each featuring προσλαμβάνεσθε (v. 7) and λέγω (v. 8) as predicates within their respective clause complex structures, emerge as themeless primary clauses. This is due to their lack of a fully grammaticalized nominal form in the nominative case for their respective participants, thereby functioning as rhematic elements within this thematic unit. These processes further support and expound upon the grammaticalized theme in a manner akin to how other processes, aligned with the theme in terms of the grammatical participant, interact with it. In other words, despite these verbs representing actions carried out by different participants, they enrich the semantic depth of the theme by broadening the theme's interaction with diverse participants and actions within the thematic unit. Furthermore, this analytical approach allows us to understand that the command and statement conveyed by each of the verbs, προσλαμβάνεσθε and λέγω, along with their respective process chains, should be anchored within the thematic unit's environment, which is governed by the theme ὁ θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως and its related processes. That is, this study prioritizes fully grammaticalized participants in the nominative case in primary clauses as explicit indicators for identifying theme and demarcating thematic units.[136]

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[136] Drawing upon Porter and O'Donnell's framework, Yoon also examined thematization patterns

Porter and O'Donnell delineate a higher-order organizational pattern of thematization occurring at the level above the clause complex, characterized by a grouping of thematic units. They introduce the terms "topic" and "comment" to further elaborate on this concept. In their framework, topic is defined as "the establishment of a new semantic environment for the discourse," whereas comment refers to "supporting information for the current topic."[137] Contrasting the relatively transparent lexicogrammatical markers inherent in the prime-subsequent and theme-rheme thematizations, the recognition of topic-comment thematization often necessitates a more nuanced semantic analysis. As Porter and O'Donnell observe, the conceptual architecture of thematization—particularly when topic and comment function at levels above the clause complex—does not strictly hinge on the identification of a specific central statement, commonly referred to as a topic sentence within a paragraph. Rather, it serves as a method for recognizing semantically identifiable units, discerned through semantic shifts or boundaries.[138] The process of pinpointing these semantically identifiable units is not a matter of intuitive reader observation. Instead, it involves a meticulous analytical

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in Galatians. However, in his work, Yoon diverges from Porter and O'Donnell's approach in identifying themes at the clause complex level. Unlike Porter and O'Donnell, he incorporates not only fully grammaticalized subjects but also subjects with implicit grammaticalization as evidenced in the verbs as themes. As a result, one could argue that he tends to include a wide array of participants as themes, which might be interpreted as an extensive cataloguing of participants implicitly contained within the verbs. This approach, while inclusive, may also risk reducing the analytical focus on subjects that are fully grammaticalized in the nominative case. Yoon's rationale for this broader categorization hinges on the inherent characteristics of Greek as an inflected language, stating that it "does not always require an explicit subject in a clause," thereby including implicit subjects in finite verbs as thematic elements (*Galatians*, 122). While this reasoning adds nuance to the discussion of thematization in Greek, it contrasts with other analytical perspectives that emphasize the unique role of fully grammaticalized subjects, especially in text types like Pauline letters, where they are relatively rare and exhibit a certain level of redundancy. Accordingly, the present study adheres to a more focused analytical lens, confining its scrutiny to grammatical subjects in the nominative case as the sole indicators for theme at the level of clause complex, and relegating processes and their corresponding chains to the realm of rhemes. Participants that are implicitly manifested within verbal forms and structures are thus classified as rhemes rather than themes.

[137] Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 116.

[138] Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 116.

process that commences at the clause and clause complex levels. At these foundational layers, each thematic unit is characterized by a single theme placed either in the prime or subsequent slot, along with accompanying supporting elements. Following this foundational stage, thematic units are strategically grouped together based on shared, discernible semantic and lexicogrammatical features. This process leads to the formation of a more expansive structure, termed the topic-comment unit.

As observed in the example above, Rom 15:5–12 and 15:13 function as discrete thematic units, each demarcated by its own distinctive theme—ὁ θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως (v. 5) for the former, and ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος (v. 13) for the latter. Despite their independence, these thematic units could potentially be amalgamated into a larger topic-comment unit, facilitated by the shared thematic element, ὁ θεός. Such a union becomes increasingly plausible when examined through the lens of discernible lexicogrammatical and semantic features, thus paving the way for the positing of a cohesive topic-comment unit that encompasses both thematic units.[139]

As for establishing the topic-comment unit, since a topic-comment unit is defined as a semantically identifiable unit, this integrative thematic approach does not serve as the sole determinant for its establishment. Other types of semantic and lexicogrammatical factors must also be considered to gain a comprehensive understanding. Nevertheless, the

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[139] It is essential to acknowledge that the location of the theme within a thematic unit can vary. While the themes in Rom 15:5–12 and 15:13 appear at the outset of their respective units, such an arrangement is not universally applicable across all thematic units. The placement of the nominal word group or the clause containing the theme, as well as the rhematic elements supporting it, exhibits considerable flexibility within the thematic unit. Consequently, the formation of a thematic unit is not dependent on the specific location of the theme-housing word group or clause. Meticulous scrutiny is required to discern which rhematic elements are focused around the theme, as well as to ascertain whether these elements are semantically anchored to it. This approach closely aligns with the principle of the semantic environment found in the topic-comment unit.

present study utilizes analytical results gleaned from the examination of thematization

patterns occurring at different linguistic levels as a foundational guide for delineating a

structural outline of each of the Thessalonian texts. Upon establishing the textual

structure of each Thessalonian text, informed by topic-comment units derived from

lower-level thematization patterns, I have observed that other types of meanings, along

with their meaningful relationships and progressive movements, seamlessly fit and

integrate into the individual structures.

Prominence

Prominence is conceived as the notion of linguistic highlighting, acknowledging that

texts are not constructed on a uniform, monotone plane. Instead, language users

intentionally elevate the salience of specific linguistic elements, making certain parts

stand out more than others, to capture attention and achieve a form of highlighting.[140]

This strategy establishes the avenue through which speakers or writers guide the attention

of listeners or readers towards the ideas and motifs they desire to highlight within the

discourse. Subsequently, these focal areas are reinforced by less-prominent material to

construct an effective communicative composition.[141] Given the significant role that

prominence plays in highlighting particular linguistic elements, exploring this aspect

could be crucial for a sophisticated comparative analysis of First and Second

Thessalonians. By investigating elements that are linguistically prominent in each of

these Thessalonian letters, this approach aims to yield a deeper understanding of the

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[140] Halliday, *Explorations*, 105.

[141] Reed, *Philippians*, 105–6. For works that focus on the concept of prominence within the Greek language of the New Testament, Porter, "Prominence"; Westfall, "Method for the Analysis of Prominence"; Tan, "Prominence in the Pauline Epistles"; Lee, *Romans*, 61–84; Yoon, "Prominence in New Testament Discourse."

textual features and relationships between the letters, focusing particularly on textual

similarities and dissimilarities, and thus surpassing rudimentary comparisons based on

vocabulary or phraseology alone.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of prominence, one must also engage

with related terms and attributes that frequently appear in discussions on this subject.

These include markedness, prominence, and grounding. Markedness predominantly deals

with formal characteristics concerned with the lexicogrammatical stratum, including

phonological, morphological, lexical, and clausal features, among others.[142] On the other

hand, prominence functions as a wider lens through which the elements marked for

special attention are viewed within the broader context of discourse. Prominence thus is

situated mainly at the semantic stratum, aiming to ascertain what the language user seeks

to highlight within the text.[143] Grounding is related to clarification of the textual

significance by systematically categorizing elements according to their varying levels of

prominence within a semantic hierarchy. This cline spans from background, the least

prominent elements that nonetheless provide the scaffolding for a narrative, to

foreground, the elements more prominent than and so distinguished from background

material, which are vital for the progression of discourse, and ultimately to frontground,

the most semantically weighty elements designed to capture attention.[144] As Porter and

O'Donnell remark, the motivation behind prominence finds its origin in marked

lexicogrammatical elements and culminates in their textual grounding, marking the

pivotal intersection of these concepts within linguistic highlighting.[145]

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[142] Porter, "Prominence," 52; Yoon, "Prominence in New Testament Discourse," 5.
[143] Porter, "Prominence," 52–53; Yoon, "Prominence in New Testament Discourse," 5–6.
[144] Porter, "Prominence," 53–55; Yoon, *Galatians*, 125–26.
[145] Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 140.

As observed, markedness especially serves a foundational role in linguistic

highlighting, crucially contributing to the prominence of specific linguistic elements and

thereby providing a basis for their grounding. In elucidating the formal criteria that guide

the determination of markedness, Porter and O'Donnell categorize them into five primary

groups: material, implicational, distributional, positional, and semantic markedness.[146]

Material markedness relates to morphological complexity, with elements having greater

bulk deemed more marked and thus having implications for grounding within a text.

Implicational markedness involves the degree of irregularity in related forms, where

fewer irregularities often result in a stronger grounding. Distributional markedness

depends on the frequency of a form's occurrence and is typically associated with its

semantic weight, serving as a cautionary note for interpreting grounding, especially given

corpus limitations. Positional markedness focuses on an element's location within a

linguistic structure, with markedness and thereby grounding influenced by atypical

positioning. Lastly, semantic markedness is attributed to elements with a narrow semantic

range and specific usages, making them more marked and therefore affecting their

grounding in a distinct manner.[147]

Drawing upon the markedness as determined by these formal attributes, in

conjunction with their lexicogrammatical and semantic features, one can delineate the

realms in which prominence is manifested into two fundamental categories: paradigmatic

and syntagmatic. Prominence achieved in paradigmatic choice relates to the meticulous

selection of a single linguistic item, such as verbal tense-form, mood-form, and voice-

form. Prominence realized in syntagmatic choice focuses on the strategic sequencing of

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[146] Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 149.
[147] Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 150–51. See also Porter, "Prominence," 56.

individual words, word groups, clauses, and clause complexes.[148] As discussed earlier, the linguistic items chosen paradigmatically primarily play either ideational or interpersonal metafunction, but another semantic effect they exhibit is their signification of prominence.

In the realm of verbal aspect, the degree of prominence and its corresponding grounding exhibit intricate variation, each serving unique functions in establishing the planes of discourse.[149] The perfective aspect, embodied in the aorist tense-form, serves to establish the background plane of the discourse. It forms the underlying canvas upon which other elements are situated, encapsulating the basic narrative events that are taken as complete and undifferentiated. The purpose is to set the stage and provide the foundational narrative or argumentative layers that will support the more intricate details introduced later.[150] The imperfective aspect, articulated through the present and imperfect tense-forms, occupies the foreground plane of the discourse. This aspect contributes to the development of significant characters, events, or situations that are represented as ongoing or progressive. It acts to draw the reader's attention to the dynamic aspects of the narrative or argument, whether they are unfolding actions, evolving thoughts, or emergent circumstances. The foreground plane, thus, introduces more immediate, climactic references to concrete situations or entities, contributing to the overall narrative tension or argumentative thrust. [151] Finally, the stative aspect, conveyed through the perfect and pluperfect tense-forms, focuses on the frontground plane, where elements of the discourse are introduced in an even more discrete, defined, contoured, and complex

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[148] Porter, "Prominence," 58.
[149] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 92; Porter, *Idioms*, 23.
[150] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 92; Porter, *Idioms*, 23.
[151] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 92; Porter, *Idioms*, 23.

manner. This plane is typically where the most nuanced information is presented, often encapsulating states of affairs that result from prior actions or conditions. It allows for the presentation of intricate relationships, complex emotional landscapes, or sophisticated arguments, which often serve to bring a level of resolution or deeper understanding to the discourse.[152]

In the hierarchy of prominence observed in the mood-form and its semantic feature of attitude, the indicative mood-form, with its assertive attitude, is the most common and thus considered unmarked and least prominent, serving as backgrounding. Conversely, the imperative, subjunctive, and future mood-forms, each associated with their respective directive, projective (with no expectation of its fulfillment), and expectation attitudes, are prominent and, therefore, foregrounding. Lastly, the optative mood-form, with its projective (a contingent expectation of fulfillment) attitude, is the most prominent, positioning it in the frontground.[153]

In the domain of voice-forms and their associated semantics of causality, a different but analogous hierarchical pattern emerges. The active voice-form, where agency is direct and embedded in the subject, is the most commonly occurring and, consequently, the least marked, positioning it as background. Subsequently, the passive

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[152] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 92; Porter, *Idioms*, 23. For a more vivid understanding of the interplay between Greek verbal aspects and discourse planes, consider the following analogy. The perfective aspect is akin to a mountain climber who has reached the summit, gaining a complete, unobstructed view of the entire landscape below. The imperfective aspect could be likened to a hiker making their way up the mountain trail, experiencing every twist and turn as they progress. The stative aspect, conversely, might be represented by a cartographer carefully crafting a detailed map that captures the complex contours and features of the landscape. This analogy builds upon the foundational work of Porter, who employed the metaphor of a parade to elucidate the Greek verbal aspects. While Porter's analogy centres on the events and vantage points of a parade, the present analogy shifts the focus to a natural setting, seeking to capture the same conceptual differences between aspects but within the context of mountain climbing and cartography.
[153] Porter, "Prominence," 64–65; Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 163.

voice-form, which grammaticalizes external causality within the medium–process (ergative passive), is more prominent than the active voice-form and, therefore, occupies the foreground. Then, the middle voice-form, which grammaticalizes internal causality within the medium–process (ergative middle), is the most prominent hence frontground.[154]

While verbal tense-form, mood-form, and voice-form establish prominence through paradigmatic choice, the sequential arrangements of word, word group, clause, and clause complex achieve prominence via syntagmatic choices. Owing to the inflected and non-configurational nature of the Greek language, which grants it a high degree of flexibility in clause structure, one might assume that Greek lacks a conventional word order. Nonetheless, even within its flexible framework, the Greek language adheres to certain conventions concerning word order and clause structure, though these are not as stringent as those found in configurational languages such as English.[155]

For instance, the most prevalent clause structures in the New Testament consist of either a "predicate" alone or a "predicate-complement" combination. These common structures are succeeded in frequency by the "complement-predicate" and "subject-predicate" formations. The former set of structures is considered conventional and does not confer prominence on any particular element. In contrast, the latter set is considered atypical, thereby assigning prominence to the initial element in the clause.[156] In clause complex configurations, if the conventional sequence is altered so that the secondary clause leads the primary one, or the apodosis is placed before the protasis, such

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[154] Porter, "Prominence," 61–64; Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 171.
[155] Porter, "Word Order," 178.
[156] Porter, "Prominence," 71.

reordering grants prominence to the secondary clause or protasis within the overall structure of the clause complex.[157]

In addition to sequencing norms and possibilities for prominence at the clause and clause complex levels, additional complex patterns and variations in ordering are evident at the levels of individual words and word groups.[158] However, this study will not delve into all these finer details due to its limited scope. Instead, as we closely analyze the Thessalonian texts, should any significant patterns related to sequence and prominence arise, I will provide detailed explanations. At this juncture, it is worthwhile to stress the key role that sequential ordering plays in relation to thematization.

As previously outlined, at the level of the clause complex, the realization of a theme is contingent upon the explicit grammaticalization of the subject. Particularly, the use of an explicit subject is generally less common in discursive or expository forms of discourse, such as the Thessalonian letters, than in narrative discourse, where diverse events and associated participants are often sequentially introduced. From a different angle, many clauses or clause complexes in such discursive texts may lack a theme, consisting solely of a rheme. Thus, the appearance of a fully grammaticalized subject itself can be considered a significant feature that commands prominence. Additionally, when a fully grammaticalized subject is positioned in the prime slot in the primary clause, this configuration further heightens the subject's importance. The clause, in turn, focuses on this subject as the starting point for conveying its messages, a role delineated by the concept of prime. In this instance, the combination of theme and prime acquires the highest prominence within the clause complex, consequently elevating the theme to a

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[157] Porter, "Prominence," 72–73.
[158] Porter, "Prominence," 67–71.

frontgrounded position.[159] When a theme, in the form of a fully grammaticalized subject, is positioned in a subsequent slot, its prominence is reduced and it is considered to be foregrounded, rather than frontgrounded. However, such a configuration still holds greater prominence than themeless clauses, which consist solely of a rheme.[160] Consequently, the varying degrees of prominence in thematization relative to ordering can be arranged along a continuum: from clauses that are themeless and thus occupy a backgrounded position, to those with a fully grammaticalized subject in the subsequent slot that are foregrounded, and finally to clauses where a fully grammaticalized subject occupies the prime slot, achieving the highest level of frontgrounding.

Concluding Remarks

The principal objective of this study, which utilizes discourse analysis focused on the linguistic concept of register, is to elucidate the types of register instantiated in First and Second Thessalonians. More concretely, this study aims to identify what register-specific semantic and structural potentials are actualized in these Thessalonian texts, and subsequently, to ascertain the types of meanings these texts realize through various linguistic elements and structures. Within the ambit of this overarching aim, the study will focus on two specific objectives as it undertakes a comprehensive register analysis of the Thessalonian correspondence.

The initial focus of this research is to scrutinize the persistent contentions that challenge the attribution of Pauline authorship to 2 Thessalonians, particularly in its textual relationship with 1 Thessalonians. The aim is to either corroborate or refute these

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[159] Porter, "Prominence," 72.
[160] Porter, "Prominence," 72.

claims, which predominantly hinge on alleged internal inconsistencies between the two letters. These inconsistencies are often cited in the domains of eschatological viewpoints, attitudinal orientations towards the recipients, modes of interactional exchange, and specific textual features that suggest imitation. By employing a meticulous and delicate register analysis of these Thessalonian texts, the study anticipates offering nuanced insights into these areas of contention.

For example, the ideational meanings of First and Second Thessalonians derived from this analysis are expected to help resolve whether the perspectives concerning the parousia—its nature, timing, and broader implications—differ substantively between the two letters. By investigating the experiential realms and associated concepts within the texts, the research will assess whether these letters imply that the parousia is either imminent or delayed.

Furthermore, interpersonal meanings will be leveraged to elucidate whether there is indeed any divergence in the author's evaluative stance towards the recipients across the two letters. The analysis will critically explore whether the tone of the first letter leans towards amicability, while the tone of the second appears more austere. Additional focus will be given to issues related to interactional exchanges, specifically those prompted by the presence or absence of a verification mark in the final greetings of the letters.

Finally, the textual meanings obtained from the analysis will inform an in-depth examination of the lexical, syntactical, and structural similarities or differences, including those manifested through linguistic highlighting, between the letters. The study will assess whether such textual elements are indeed remarkably similar enough to warrant the assertion that 2 Thessalonians is an imitation of 1 Thessalonians.

The secondary objective of this study is to identify the context of situation as linguistically construed by the Thessalonian texts themselves. This aim differs significantly from prevailing historical-critical methods in that it avoids any reliance on historical presumptions, mirror reading, or inferences related to material situational settings. Instead, it focuses solely on the semiotically realized context of situation as explicitly expressed through language-in-use within the texts.

This context of situation, once identified, will serve to either validate or challenge situational reconstructions proposed by scholars, both those who refute Pauline authorship and those who advocate for it. Despite their differing stances on authorship, these groups often share common assumptions in their contextual understanding. Specifically, many scholars propose that there is a significant shift in the interpersonal viewpoint of the author towards the recipients from the first letter to the second. They often argue that the Thessalonian community faced considerable issues, including misunderstandings of Paul's teachings (particularly concerning eschatology), ensuing extreme eschatological fervour, rampant idleness, acute grievances over deceased members, and discontentment with Paul due to his absence. Additionally, confusion caused by spurious or inauthentic correspondence is also posited as a likely issue. In essence, whether denying or affirming Pauline authorship, most analyses tend to underestimate the Thessalonian believers and assume that the purpose of the letters is to correct an immature church.

This study will draw upon the contextual components—field, tenor, and mode, as well as their configurations—identified by register analysis to either affirm or challenge such prevailing situational reconstructions. The key inquiry centres on whether the

Thessalonian texts themselves construct such specific contexts of situation, and whether these contexts are indeed semiotically encoded through the meaningful use of language chosen in the texts.

As a methodological procedure for fulfilling its overarching objectives, this study will undertake a comprehensive examination of the metafunctional meanings based on the lexicogrammatical elements and structures manifest in First and Second Thessalonians.

For ideational meanings, the study will investigate the lexemes deployed within the letters, examining how these lexemes distinctly convey key ideas and concepts, as well as their role in construing the experiences with which the texts are engaged. Additionally, a transitivity network will be employed, focusing on process types, verbal aspects, as well as associated participants and circumstances. This will facilitate an exploration of the ideas and experiences that are construed and engaged within these letters. Furthermore, this approach will illuminate the perspectives from which these texts conceptualize various processes.

In regard to interpersonal meanings, the study will explore the linguistic means by which the two Thessalonian letters identify participants and enact relationships and roles. Specific words used for identifying participants, as well as Greek case and person structures for establishing relationships and roles, will be scrutinized. Moreover, an examination of verbal mood-forms will assist in elucidating the attitudinal postures articulated in each text, as well as the particular views of reality they signify.

As for textual meanings, this study aims to delineate the textual structures unique to each Thessalonian letter. This will primarily be accomplished through an analysis

centred on thematization. Based on these textual structures, the study will examine

various textual features, including cohesive devices that interlock different

lexicogrammatical elements and units. It will also explore what motifs or ideas are given

linguistic prominence through lexicogrammatical markedness and how these contribute

to the planes of discourse.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF 1 THESSALONIANS

Preliminary Considerations

In the previous chapter, several foundational methods were outlined. Building on those principles, the ensuing chapters aim to dissect the linguistic details present in the texts traditionally called First and Second Thessalonians. The main endeavour here is to examine closely the language of these texts, unveiling the intricate layers of meaning embedded within. This detailed study is anchored in three essential dimensions of linguistic meaning. The ideational dimension explores how language encapsulates experiences and represents ideas. The interpersonal dimension delves into the ways language delineates roles between the author and the recipients, modulates these relationships, and provides insight into the author's evaluative stance towards the recipients. Finally, the textual dimension examines the organizational role of language, ensuring that the various types of meaning are appropriately tailored to their context.

As I begin my linguistic examination of the Thessalonian letters, several preliminary considerations and guiding assumptions must be addressed. These fundamental underpinnings serve to ground our study firmly within the boundaries of established linguistic principles, while also respecting the unique context of the Thessalonians' composition. Addressing these premises at the outset prepares us for a more informed exploration of these pivotal texts, especially when discussing the purportedly problematic aspects of their textual relationship.

First, this study sheds light on the linguistic characteristics inherent in the Thessalonian letters by delineating their textual structures through a thematization scheme where each discrete segment is recognized as a topic-comment unit, emerging from an analysis grounded in prime-subsequent and theme-rheme constructs. Within a topic-comment unit, a participant shift, marked by a fully grammaticalized subject in the nominative case positioned within the primary clause, signals the presence of a new thematic unit. Such a subject, serving as a thematic element, not only drives the development of its respective thematic unit but also has its meaning enriched and expanded by associated rhematic elements that elaborate on that governing theme. This thematization approach is essential for deciphering the text's distinctive structure, especially in the analysis of Greek texts, which are composed in a language known for its morphological richness and monolectic properties of Greek verbs. By employing this methodology, we gain an understanding that a thematic element signifies a thematic unit. Subsequently, a group of thematic units semantically related coalesces to form a discerned topic-comment unit. Ultimately, the collective aggregate of topic-comment units constitutes the text's comprehensive textual structure and organization.[1]

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[1] In delineating the textual structures of First and Second Thessalonians based on the thematization scheme, this study primarily employs annotations from the OpenText project (www.opentext.org), which provide an essential framework for identifying clause divisions—distinguishing primary from subordinate clauses—and for pinpointing grammaticalized subjects in the nominative case within primary clauses. It is important to note that there are occasional discrepancies between the annotations provided by OpenText.org and the textual structures derived from the thematization approach used here. Such discrepancies, when they occur, are meticulously noted and addressed within the analysis to ensure clarity and accuracy. For those interested in a deeper understanding of the OpenText.org annotation project, which includes a representative corpus of Hellenistic Greek encompassing the entire New Testament and selected Hellenistic writings of the same period, the essay by Land and G. H. Pang is invaluable. This essay outlines the project's planning and development process, highlights the roles of key contributors, discusses the resulting data, and reviews its reception within the digital humanities community, while also providing guidance on how to effectively utilize these annotations in scholarly work. See Land and Pang, "Past, Present, and Future of the OpenText.org Annotated Greek Corpus."

Building on this structural outline, the subsequent discussion will explore various types of meaning, including ideational, interpersonal, and other textual meanings such as cohesion and prominence, within each topic-comment unit.[2] Following this exploration, I will scrutinize how these different types of meaning contribute to the establishment of a distinguished topic-comment unit, thereby offering a holistic insight into the text's thematic and semantic architecture. To provide a clearer overview of the structural and semantic intricacies within the confines of the topic-comment unit, I will introduce Greek passages from First and Second Thessalonians at the beginning of our discussion for each unit. Each Greek excerpt embodies a topic-comment unit from the corresponding Thessalonian letter. These excerpts are further divided into distinct thematic units, marked by a fully grammaticalized subject in the nominative case, accompanied by rhematic elements that augment its meaning.

Second, this study proceeds on the premise that the discourse type of First and Second Thessalonians corresponds with that of a letter, specifically adhering to the conventions of ancient Greco-Roman epistolary tradition, which is culturally situated and embedded within the practices and expectations of the period. Within Thessalonian scholarship, there has been substantial debate concerning the genre or discourse type,

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[2] In analyzing the semantic layers according to the metafunctional categories of language used in the two Thessalonian texts, the analytical procedure begins by presenting the textual structure, delineated through thematization, for each topic-comment unit. This is followed by an exploration of ideational and interpersonal meanings, and then by an examination of other textual meanings, including cohesion and prominence. The initial focus on thematization is strategic; it reflects how writers or speakers structure and organize their text, thus aiding the analysis of ideational, interpersonal, and other textual meanings in light of the text's organization. Once a topic-comment unit is established through thematization, the discussion progresses to further metafunctional analyses of lexicogrammatical elements within the unit. As discussed in the previous chapter, thematization, along with cohesion and prominence, belongs to the textual meaning category and is central to the mode of discourse. Therefore, although thematization is introduced first within each topic-comment unit, it, together with cohesion and prominence, plays a pivotal role in the textual metafunction, reflecting the mode of discourse as conceptualized within the framework of SFL.

with the central contention being whether the Thessalonian texts are interpreted through the lens of ancient epistolary frameworks or viewed from rhetorical traditions and conventions, subsequently influencing the analytical perspective adopted.[3] From a functional standpoint, I posit that the Thessalonian texts are foremost social semiotic instruments, facilitating correspondence between physically distanced communities or individuals and reflecting the cultural and communicative norms of their era.[4]

While this study situates First and Second Thessalonians within the cultural milieu of ancient Greco-Roman epistolary conventions and is concerned with identifying their structural and organizational outlines, it does not strictly adhere to the analytical approach advocated by proponents of epistolary analysis, which often focuses on specific formulaic elements within the letters.[5] As previously mentioned, rather than imposing the commonly accepted conventions of epistolary formulas and wordings onto the Thessalonian letters, I will endeavour to structure the outlines of First and Second Thessalonians through principles of thematization. This approach seeks to unveil and emphasize their distinctive and inherent organizational patterns, giving due respect to their unique textual nuances.[6]

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[3] For an exploration of the scholarly debates surrounding the methodological approaches to the Thessalonian letters, specifically epistolary versus rhetorical analysis, consult the contributions in Donfried and Beutler, eds., *Thessalonians Debate*. When examining biblical commentaries that arise from these two distinct methodological stances concerning the genre or literary type of the Thessalonian letters, one might refer to Witherington, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* for the rhetorical analysis perspective, and Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians* for the epistolary approach.

[4] See Lieu, "Letters," 445–46; Reed, "Language of Change," 129–30.

[5] For a robust argument emphasizing the significance of various epistolary formulas or fixed expressions found in the New Testament letters—many borrowed from the letter-writing conventions of the ancient Greco-Roman world—and the ramifications of their roles in outlining the letter's structure, consult Weima, *Ancient Letter Writer*, 6–10.

[6] It should be noted that this approach does not wholly ignore the significance of formulaic epistolary phrases. Such phrases are esteemed in this study as one of the pivotal discourse markers essential for demarcating textual segments. However, this study exercises caution by not solely relying on traditional epistolary formulas, which have often been regarded as manifesting predetermined functions and designated locations within the epistolary framework, to interpret the Thessalonian letters. This is

Third, with respect to the categorization of First and Second Thessalonians as ancient letters, this study posits that the mainline of discourse of these letters would predominantly manifest in the imperfective aspect, as conveyed by the present verbal tense-form. Considering the discursive and expositional nature of the Thessalonian letters, which deeply engage with theological, ethical, and relational issues and present them as continuous and evolving processes, it stands to reason that the primary thread of these discourses is entrenched firmly in the imperfective aspect. Such an analytical perspective would suggest that the layers of the Thessalonian discourses are primarily constituted by elements foregrounded in terms of depicting actions and processes, as represented by the imperfective aspect. Other verbal aspectual categories would play supplementary roles in further delineating the planes of the Thessalonian discourses. For instance, the perfective aspect, as expressed in the aorist tense-form, sets the background layer of the discourse, while the stative aspect, as grammaticalized by the perfect tense-form, establishes the frontgrounded stratum of the discourse.

Fourth, I wish to clarify the terminology I employ when referencing the letter writer and recipient of the Thessalonian correspondence. I will use terms such as "the senders (or co-senders)" or the specific names "Paul, Silas (or Silvanus), and Timothy" consistently in the plural form when referring to the authorial figure of the letters, and designations like "the Thessalonian recipients" or other suitable variations as the letter recipient as indicated within the letters themselves. In instances where the first person

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particularly pertinent when such formulas could risk obfuscating the intricate structure of various textual units and sub-units. This perspective underscores the versatility of these formulas, highlighting their ability to manifest in various parts of the letter and assume multifaceted structural roles. For an in-depth discussion on the roles epistolary formulas hold in shaping discourse units within the scope of an extended linguistic framework applied to epistolary literature, one may refer to Porter, "Functional Letter Perspective," 16–18. Additionally, see Reed, "Modern Linguistics," 42–53; Reed, "Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories," 314–24.

singular appears, either in nominal forms or as implied in verbs, I will use "Paul" in line with the indications found within the letters.[7] It should be made clear, however, that when I refer to the author of the letters as either Paul or the collective Pauline mission team, or to the recipients as the Thessalonian believers, I make no presumption of Pauline authorship in my analysis of the Thessalonian letters, at the outset. Instead, I perceive them as the implied authors and recipients within the Thessalonian texts, and I reserve judgment regarding the authenticity of Pauline authorship until after a comprehensive analysis of each letter.

On a final note, it is essential to state that my analysis of First and Second Thessalonians does not aim to serve as a comprehensive exegetical commentary on these biblical books. The focus of the study lies in discerning the meanings embedded in each letter, mapping the systematic relationship between the contextual parameters of field, tenor, and mode, and the metafunctional components of their language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Such analyses of the purposeful use of language in the

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[7] Given the instances of first person singular expressions, manifested in verbal forms or through the use of proper names and personal pronouns at specific junctures of the two Thessalonian letters, Paul emerges as the principal author, his presence interwoven with the authorial voice of the letters (e.g., 1 Thess 2:18; 3:5; 5:27; 2 Thess 2:5; 3:17). For this reason, while designating Silas and Timothy as co-senders who contribute to the communal voice of the letters, I acknowledge Paul as the primary authorial voice, reflecting the predominance of his construal of experiences and enactment of semiotic situations within the correspondence. Therefore, the headings of the topic-comment units to be presented in the ensuing discussions shall be delineated based on the actions, statements, or other forms of semiotic activities that Paul, as the principal implied author, undertakes through the Thessalonian texts. These headings might bear titles such as "Paul's Greeting and Thanksgiving," "Paul's Intercessory Prayer," or "Paul's Exhortations," among others. However, during my detailed analysis of the Thessalonian texts, I shall conscientiously distinguish between the uses of first person plural and singular, especially in relation to self-reference of the authorial figure. When the text indicates the first person plural, be it in verbal forms or as a personal pronoun, I will reference the associated participants in the plural form. Conversely, when the first person singular is signified, either in its verbal or personal pronoun representation, I will allude to the affiliated participant in the singular form. This approach is adopted in this study to illuminate the identifications of the participants and their roles based on the formal, or lexicogrammatical, indications present within the texts. Furthermore, this research operates on the premise that such a dynamic utilization of person indicators—pertaining to verbal processes and participant designations—may very well be the result of an author's deliberate strategy in constructing the context of situation by meticulously employing linguistic resources, particularly those related to person indication.

Thessalonian writings may shed light on the register type that each First and Second Thessalonians instantiates. Thus, this study will selectively concentrate on addressing the linguistic resources that are most relevant to the metafunctional components of language, their meaningful configuration, and their contributions to reflecting the immediate context of situation each Thessalonian text realizes.

As a culmination, this comprehensive linguistic exploration not only enriches our understanding of the intricate, contextually intertwined meanings within First and Second Thessalonians but also provides a fresh lens through which we can address longstanding debates on their authorship, particularly those grounded in alleged textual contradictions and situational inconsistencies between the two letters.

Paul's Commitment to Maintaining and Strengthening Relational Ties with the Thessalonian Believers (1 Thess 1:1–10)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1
[1] Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ,[8]

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[8] In presenting the topic-comment units for discussion, various linguistic features are marked to facilitate analysis of thematization patterns, as well as the grammatical structures of the verbal elements employed. The shaded elements denote theme elements that function to formally demarcate the thematic units, characterized by the fully grammaticalized subject in the nominative case within the primary clause. The finite verbs, serving as predicators within the primary clause structures, are highlighted in bold. These verbs appear in independent clauses that are autonomous, neither dependent on nor subordinate to any other clauses. However, in Greek, independent clauses may also occur without explicit finite verbs, referred to as "verbless clauses," or they may include non-finite verbal forms such as participles or infinitives. In the cases of such clauses, where finite verbs do not explicitly occur, I will refrain from marking verbal elements. Instead, I will present these sentences as they are. Additional verbal elements—whether in finite, participle, or infinitive forms—that are part of secondary or embedded clauses, are underlined to delineate their grammatical function. A secondary clause is dependent on (subordinate to) another clause, while an embedded clause operates as a grammatically lower-ranked component within another clause. Predicators of embedded clauses frequently employ non-finite forms, such as participles and infinitives, although finite clauses may also be embedded. An embedded construction often manifests when a clause is integrated within a larger clause structure; for example, when a clause structure is rank-shifted to serve as a noun group or an adverbial group, it functions either as the head of a noun phrase or a modifier, or as an adjunct within the larger clause structure. For an examination of clauses operating at various ranks, and the different grammatical functions served by an embedded clause after rank-shifting, refer to Halliday,

Thematic Unit 2
χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη.

2 **Εὐχαριστοῦμεν** τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν μνείαν <u>ποιούμενοι</u> ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν ἡμῶν, ἀδιαλείπτως 3 <u>μνημονεύοντες</u> ὑμῶν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν, 4 <u>εἰδότες</u>, ἀδελφοὶ <u>ἠγαπημένοι</u> ὑπὸ θεοῦ, τὴν ἐκλογὴν ὑμῶν,
    5 ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ <u>ἐγενήθη</u> εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ,
      καθὼς <u>οἴδατε</u> οἷοι <u>ἐγενήθημεν</u> ἐν ὑμῖν δι᾽ ὑμᾶς·
    6 καὶ ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν <u>ἐγενήθητε</u> καὶ τοῦ κυρίου, <u>δεξάμενοι</u> τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει πολλῇ μετὰ χαρᾶς πνεύματος ἁγίου,
      7 ὥστε <u>γενέσθαι</u> ὑμᾶς τύπον πᾶσιν τοῖς <u>πιστεύουσιν</u> ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ.

Thematic Unit 3[9]
8 ἀφ᾽ ὑμῶν γὰρ **ἐξήχηται** ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου οὐ μόνον ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ Ἀχαΐᾳ,

Thematic Unit 4
ἀλλ᾽ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ἡ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν **ἐξελήλυθεν**,
    ὥστε μὴ χρείαν <u>ἔχειν</u> ἡμᾶς <u>λαλεῖν</u> τι·

Thematic Unit 5
9 <u>αὐτοὶ</u> γὰρ περὶ ἡμῶν **ἀπαγγέλλουσιν** ὁποίαν εἴσοδον <u>ἔσχομεν</u> πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ πῶς <u>ἐπεστρέψατε</u> πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων <u>δουλεύειν</u> θεῷ <u>ζῶντι</u> καὶ ἀληθινῷ, 10 καὶ <u>ἀναμένειν</u> τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν,
    ὃν <u>ἤγειρεν</u> ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦν τὸν <u>ῥυόμενον</u> ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς <u>ἐρχομένης</u>.

"Categories of the Theory of Grammar," 241–92.

    [9] The OpenText.org project annotates the clause complexes in 1:8–10 as subordinate to the primary clause complex of 1:2. However, this study posits that these clause complexes stand as primary clauses in their own right. This assertion is based on the grammatical structure observed; there are no explicit grammatical markers of subordination such as conjunctive devices or particles typically used to indicate dependency. The conjunctions γάρ and ἀλλά, as used here, do not function to subordinate but rather to connect these clauses to other primary clauses, facilitating a coordination of ideas that supports their status as primary clauses. Semantically, these clauses further emphasize and expand upon the senders' gratitude to God, highlighted by the Thessalonians' commendable reputation heard from churches outside of Thessalonica, thus playing a distinct role as an independent thematic unit and contributing to shaping the larger topic-comment unit. For a discussion of the grammatical roles of γάρ and ἀλλά in joining various levels of linguistic units, where γάρ functions to join clauses, clause complexes, or higher levels such as paragraphs, and ἀλλά at words, word groups, clauses, and clause complexes, refer to Porter and O'Donnell, "Conjunctions, Clines and Levels of Discourse," 8–10.

The first topic-comment unit of 1 Thessalonians, encompassing 1:1–10, is structured through five thematic units, each marked by the presence of a fully grammaticalized subject in the nominative case within the primary clause. As indicated in the biblical excerpt presented above, the following five entities establish each of the five thematic units: Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος (1:1a), χάρις . . . καὶ εἰρήνη (1:1b), ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου (1:8a), ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ἡ πρὸς τὸν θεόν (1:8b), and αὐτοί (1:9). Among these five thematically highlighted elements, three themes are positioned in the prime slot (Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος, χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη, and αὐτοί), while the other two occupy the subsequent slot (ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου and ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ἡ πρὸς τὸν θεόν), with the circumstantial information expressed by the prepositional word groups ἀφ' ὑμῶν (1:8) and ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ (1:9) being in the prime slot instead.

From these identified thematic elements, it is apparent that the topic-comment unit of the letter begins by thematizing Paul, Silas, and Timothy as co-senders. This initial thematic choice aligns with the conventional structure of letter-type discourse, signaling the commencement of an unfolding discourse. Furthermore, it also signals that the context of the situation, with which the text immediately and directly engages, is shaped through the perspectives of these authorial figures in relation to the Thessalonian recipients, who are presented as rheme in the same verbless clause. The letter then progresses by thematizing the act of greeting by the letter senders, the word of the Lord, the faith of the Thessalonian recipients toward God, and other believers outside the Thessalonian church. All other lexicogrammatical elements and structures within their respective thematic units function as rheme, serving to elaborate on and expand the meanings delineated by the themes to which they are anchored.

In this topic-comment unit, the theme of the second thematic unit, centered on the word group χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη (1:1b), is notably supported by more extensive and complex rhematic elements revolving around the verbal group εὐχαριστοῦμεν (1:2–7), in contrast to those of the other thematic units. From this theme-rheme construct, it can be inferred that the letter senders do not merely position the semiotic act of greeting, expressed by χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη, as part of the letter's opening; instead, they promote it to the status of a distinct thematic element, thereby distinguishing it from the prescript-adscript portion of the letter.[10] The elevation of the greeting to thematic status reveals a nuanced way of highlighting the letter's organizational features in thematizing the specific form of relational engagement between the senders and recipients. The inclusion of an expression of gratitude further develops this dynamic, positioning thanksgiving as a rheme that complements and enhances the thematic element of the salutation. The expression of thanksgiving therefore functions as an extension of the act of greeting, playing a role in

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[10] In the context of epistolary literature, especially within New Testament letters, the word group χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη—or variations thereof—is typically employed as a fixed form for expressing an act of greeting, immediately following the introduction of the letter writer and recipient at the beginning of the letter. Therefore, most scholars and commentators situate this expression as part of the letter's opening, defining its standard form as "A to B, greetings." See Exler, *Form of the Ancient Greek Letter*, 24–40; Aune, *New Testament in its Literary Environment*, 163. However, the analytical result of thematization suggests that the χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη word group in the Thessalonian letter functions as a distinct thematic element, primarily because it is grammaticalized in the nominative case in the primary clause, which is characterized as a verbless clause. Rather than employing the common verbal expression like χαίρειν, as seen in most ancient Greco-Roman letters, the grammaticalization of this salutation in the nominal form is also noteworthy on its own. Meanwhile, referring to Hasan's distinction between progressive and punctuative moves in discourse progression, Land defines expressions like greetings as punctuative moves in the flow of linguistic interaction. According to Land, they are associated either with the optional elements of a structure or with more subtle distinctions related to how a given activity is being enacted. See Land, *2 Corinthians*, 61–62. However, given that greetings are integral elements of letter discourse, appearing at both the beginning and end as salutations and farewells in establishing a relational bond between letter writers and recipients, they can be considered essential components of linguistic interactions and structural markers within epistolary discourse. Considering all these factors, the χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη word group in the Thessalonian letter can be recognized as a distinct thematic element that the letter writer foregrounds in advancing discourse moves, emphasizing its unique role in establishing relational bonds and discourse structure within epistolary communication.

both maintaining and strengthening the interpersonal connections between the co-senders and the Thessalonian recipients.

Ideational Meaning

Excluding the thematized word group Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος (1:1a), all thematic elements in this topic-comment unit are elaborated by the process chains characterized by the finite verbal clause constructions. As delineated above, the theme χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη (1:1b) is further expanded by the process chain governed by the finite verb εὐχαριστοῦμεν (1:2–7), which functions as a mental process and, in this instance, is grammaticalized in the imperfective aspect here. This aspect depicts the process as ongoing and in progress within the discourse, thereby carrying the mainline of the discourse. The three letter senders are the primary participants in the act of thanksgiving, functioning as a senser of the mental process, while God and the Thessalonians are involved as secondary participants, being sensed as the object of the process and the reason for it, respectively. Their thanksgiving is further developed through concrete manners of the process and additional reasons, which are grammaticalized in a series of embedded and subordinate clause complexes.[11] Another imperfective process in this

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[11] After initially introducing the temporal feature of perpetual gratitude through the adverb πάντοτε, modifying the predicate εὐχαριστοῦμεν, the passage elaborates this process through a sequence of embedded clauses, constructed with participial structures (ποιούμενοι, μνημονεύοντες, and εἰδότες). These participles detail the specific manners of expressing gratitude, particularly in relation to the recipients. Moreover, the process of thanksgiving is further developed by a ὅτι clause, which is composed of two subordinate clause complexes. These complexes provide additional, layered reasons for the act of thanksgiving, enriching the interpretative analysis by elucidating the underlying motivations and contexts of this expression of gratitude. Additionally, within the thanksgiving clause structure, a distinct pattern in the use of verbal aspect is evident. The mental processes related to the senders' awareness of the Thessalonians being chosen by God (εἰδότες . . . τὴν ἐκλογὴν ὑμῶν in 1:4) and the Thessalonians' understanding of the senders' conduct (οἴδατε οἶοι ἐγενήθημεν in 1:5b) are expressed in the stative aspect through the perfect tense-form. This grammatical structure effectively foregrounds the participants' mutual state of knowledge regarding their status and deeds. In contrast, the existential processes of transformation

topic-comment unit includes ἀπαγγέλλουσιν (1:9), a verbal process wherein the primary participants are the believers outside the Thessalonian church, functioning the role of sayer. The remaining content serves as the verbiage, detailing the reported or accounted information about the enduring relationship between the church founders and the Thessalonian church, as well as the Thessalonians' steadfast adherence to the Christian faith since its inception.

Between the two processes depicting the imperfective aspect, there are other processes exemplifying the stative aspect. These are grammaticalized in the perfect tense-form within their respective primary clauses: ἐξήχηται (1:8a) and ἐξελήλυθεν (1:8b). The former represents a verbal process, indicating that the word of the Lord has sounded forth from the Thessalonian recipients, who function as a sayer, as evidenced by the passive voice-form of the finite verb. The latter represents a material process, signifying that the faith of the Thessalonian recipients, functioning here as an actor, has gone forth. In particular, the senders construe the extent of the processes' effect as reaching not only Macedonia and Achaia but also every place. Since these two processes are depicted in the stative aspect, the senders portray the proclamation and dissemination of the word of the Lord from the Thessalonians, as well as the broad reach of their faith, as a more discrete, defined, contoured, and complex state of affairs in this topic-comment unit, compared to

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or becoming (ἐγενήθη in 1:5a, ἐγενήθημεν in 1:5b, and ἐγενήθητε in 1:6a), along with the material process of acceptance (δεξάμενοι in 1:6b), are conveyed in the perfective aspect using the aorist tense-form. This aspectual contrast positions these processes as functioning as background material, thereby setting the stage for the context of situation that highlights the substantial shared knowledge between the senders and the recipients. The pattern of verbal aspect observed in the thanksgiving clause complex accentuates the ideational significance of the letter senders' recognition of the divine selection of the recipients. This, in turn, highlights the recipients' comprehension of the senders' competence and integrity in their interactions, as evidenced by the transformative experiences shared between the letter senders and the Thessalonian recipients.

the processes depicted by other verbal aspectual categories. Consequently, the externally reported announcement about the Thessalonians' reputation, as conveyed in the clause complex immediately following (1:9–10), is strongly reinforced by these two processes characterized as frontground material.

Interpersonal Meaning

Within the domain of interpersonal meaning in language use, it becomes evident that the letter designates both Paul and his co-senders, as well as the Thessalonian believers, as primary participants. This is clearly demonstrated in the opening of the letter at 1:1, indicating that the senders are responsible for constructing, or realizing, the context of situation predominantly with respect to the Thessalonian recipients. Therefore, it can be inferred that the enactment of interpersonal roles and relationships among these primary participants, along with the evaluative stance and attitude, are exclusively addressed from the perspectives of the letter writers and senders.[12]

Beyond these primary participants, the letter also introduces secondary participants who serve to support, elaborate upon, or contrast with the relational dynamics and actions of the primary participants. This inclusion may enrich the discourse, adding depth and complexity without altering its main trajectory. In this topic-comment unit, the divine figures such as God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the

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[12] At the beginning of the letter (1:1), the three letter senders and the Thessalonian recipients are initially invoked by name, thus establishing them as extralinguistic entities. This could suggest a first-order social role and relationship, with the senders assuming an authoritative role, stemming from their apostolic status and their position as founders of the church, over the members of the Thessalonian church. However, these extralinguistically affirmed social roles and relationships are further defined and construed intra-linguistically, giving rise to second-order social roles and relationships as the discourse progresses. In this regard, from an interpersonal perspective, the first thematic unit positions Paul and his co-senders, as well as the Thessalonian recipients, as primary participants, forming the interpersonal core of the letter from the beginning.

Holy Spirit, as well as fellow believers in Macedonia and Achaia are introduced as secondary participants within the purview of the discourse's interpersonal dynamic landscape. Throughout this topic-comment unit, the senders consistently express their highly esteemed evaluative stance towards the Thessalonian recipients, invoking these secondary participants. For example, the senders construe the Thessalonian believers as individuals who are united with God and Jesus Christ (1:1), divinely chosen (1:4), striving to imitate the Lord Jesus Christ (1:6), embracing the word with joy even in times of great affliction, being guided by the Holy Spirit (1:6), and receiving recognition from believers outside the Thessalonian congregation for their unwavering faith in Jesus Christ (1:8–10), among numerous other instances.

The processes in the primary clauses within this topic-comment unit are all expressed in the indicative mood-form, grammaticalizing the assertive attitude about what are put forward as the actual condition of reality. The senders convey their gratitude for the Thessalonian believers (εὐχαριστοῦμεν in 1:2), basing it on factive presuppositions articulated via an array of participles, and inform about reports from believers external to the Thessalonian church regarding the reputation of the Thessalonians' faith (ἀπαγγέλλουσιν in 1:9).[13] All these elements are expressed in the indicative mood-form, thereby being recognized as factual reality by the senders. Furthermore, the metaphorical expressions crafted by the senders, encompassing abstract entities such as the word of the Lord from the Thessalonian believers, their faith toward God, and the far-reaching effects of their dissemination beyond Macedonia and Achaia, even to every place, are also

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[13] While debate persists over the incorporation of grammatical forms such as participles and infinitives into the attitude system, Porter notes that these forms are essential for grammaticalizing the aspect that dictates the assertion of factive presuppositions. Thus, this characteristic is closely linked to the semantics of attitude. Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 390–91; Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 166.

conveyed in the indicative mood-form (ἐξήχηται and ἐξελήλυθεν in 1:8). Thus, from the senders' standpoint, the Thessalonian believers are perceived as akin to those who spread the Gospel to the world, which is asserted as an actual truth through this discourse.

Textual Meaning

The five thematic units identified are cohesively tied together to form a semantically demarcated topic-comment unit. After identifying themselves as authorial figures addressing the Thessalonian recipients, the senders make a greeting with further elaboration via a thanksgiving statement. Using the prepositional word group ἀφ' ὑμῶν (1:8) that anaphorically refers back to the Thessalonian recipients addressed in the thanksgiving, coupled with the inferential or explanatory conjunction γάρ, which in more functional terms indicates backing for the material previously stated, the senders emphatically endorse the reputation and commendable nature of the Thessalonian's faith in a metaphorical expression.[14] Additionally, the senders again employ the conjunction γάρ (1:9), accompanied by the intensive pronoun αὐτοί, which anaphorically refers to the believers beyond the Thessalonian congregation, to cumulatively underscore the esteem and acclaim of the Thessalonians' faith. Thus, the thematic units collectively form a higher-level semantic structure that illustrates Paul, along with his co-senders, actively committing to affirm and strengthen their relational ties with the Thessalonian recipients by endorsing and elevating the Thessalonians' esteemed position in the Christian faith.

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[14] For a detailed discussion on the function of γάρ introducing supporting information in relation to the previously stated material, refer to Land, *2 Corinthians*, 74–75. While Land defines the functional role of γάρ within the scope of linking interpersonally oriented moves of discourse, his characterization of it can be valuable for delineating the textual linkages between thematic units in the formation of higher-level thematic structures.

In terms of textual highlighting, thematic units 2 and 5 constitute the mainline of the discourse, representing foreground material. Thematic units 3 and 4 feature stative aspect verbs, thereby providing emphatic supportive details to the mainline and serving as frontground material. While not functioning as the primary clause structure, the ὅτι clause, subordinate to the εὐχαριστοῦμεν clause complex, serves as supporting background material (1:5–7). It is characterized by a series of perfective aspect verbs, effectively providing the reason for the senders' thanksgiving to God on account of the recipients.

Taking into account these hierarchically signified grammatical and semantic elements, the clause complexes in thematic units 3 and 4 emerge as the most prominent points, distinguished by the intensive occurrences of linguistically highlighted features. Both thematic units possess the thematized elements in the nominative case word group (ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου and ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ἡ πρὸς τὸν θεόν) and the processes depicted in the stative aspect (ἐξήχηται and ἐξελήλυθεν). This rendering could be further substantiated by the occurrence of the passive voice-form (ἐξήχηται), which accentuates more the current state of the object of the action—namely, the word of the Lord being disseminated from the Thessalonians—instead of employing the unmarked active voice-form. Moreover, they are linked with the ἀλλά conjunction, emphasizing not just one, but multiple important aspects or points, in stating the role of the Thessalonian believers in spreading the word of the Lord and the Christian faith.

Considering the analytical results of the language used in this textual unit in light of the metafunctionally distinct dimensions, the topic of this unit can be delineated as the dedication of Paul, along with his co-senders, to uphold and fortify the personal

relationship with the recipients of the Thessalonian church through their epistolary communication. For the development of this topic, the senders utilize various commenting elements in their letter. These include a salutation characterized by grace and peace, augmented by a thanksgiving statement detailing its manners and motivations, and the invocation of secondary participants who attest to the faith of the Thessalonians. In particular, by conspicuously highlighting the reputation of the recipients' faith, the senders even regard them as a source from which the word of the Lord is being spread to various other regions.

Paul's Reminder of His Ministry among the Thessalonians (1 Thess 2:1–13)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1[15]
¹ Αὐτοὶ γὰρ **οἴδατε**, ἀδελφοί, τὴν εἴσοδον ἡμῶν τὴν πρὸς ὑμᾶς
ὅτι οὐ κενὴ γέγονεν,
² ἀλλὰ προπαθόντες καὶ ὑβρισθέντες,
    καθὼς οἴδατε,
ἐν Φιλίπποις ἐπαρρησιασάμεθα ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν λαλῆσαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς τὸ
εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πολλῷ ἀγῶνι.

Thematic Unit 2
³ ἡ γὰρ παράκλησις ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐκ πλάνης οὐδὲ ἐξ ἀκαθαρσίας οὐδὲ ἐν δόλῳ,

    ⁴ ἀλλὰ καθὼς δεδοκιμάσμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον
οὕτως **λαλοῦμεν**, οὐχ ὡς ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκοντες ἀλλὰ θεῷ τῷ δοκιμάζοντι τὰς
καρδίας ἡμῶν.

    ⁵ οὔτε γάρ ποτε ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας **ἐγενήθημεν**,

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[15] The OpenText.org project annotates the clause complexes from 2:1 to 2:12 as subordinate to 1:12, resulting in an unusually extensive subordinate clause structure. However, the absence of explicit grammatical markers of subordination, such as conjunctive devices or particles typically used to indicate such relationships, but rather the presence of conjunctions like ἀλλά and γάρ—which often connect clauses and clause complexes without necessarily implying subordination—suggests that these clause complexes in this topic-comment unit should not be considered grammatically subordinate to the clause complex of 1:2. Within the identified primary clause complexes, thematic elements are clearly delineated, along with rhematic elements that elaborate and expand the meanings of their corresponding thematic components.

καθὼς <u>οἴδατε,</u>

οὔτε ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας,
    θεὸς μάρτυς,

[6] οὔτε <u>ζητοῦντες</u> ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δόξαν, οὔτε ἀφ' ὑμῶν οὔτε ἀπ' ἄλλων, [7] <u>δυνάμενοι</u> ἐν βάρει <u>εἶναι</u> ὡς Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι·

ἀλλὰ **ἐγενήθημεν** νήπιοι ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν,
    ὡς ἐὰν τροφὸς <u>θάλπῃ</u> τὰ ἑαυτῆς τέκνα·

[8] οὕτως <u>ὁμειρόμενοι</u> ὑμῶν **εὐδοκοῦμεν** <u>μεταδοῦναι</u> ὑμῖν οὐ μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχάς,
    διότι ἀγαπητοὶ ἡμῖν <u>ἐγενήθητε.</u>

[9] **Μνημονεύετε** γάρ, ἀδελφοί, τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον·

νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας <u>ἐργαζόμενοι</u> πρὸς τὸ μὴ <u>ἐπιβαρῆσαί</u> τινα ὑμῶν **ἐκηρύξαμεν** εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

Thematic Unit 3
[10] ==ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες καὶ ὁ θεός,==

ὡς ὁσίως καὶ δικαίως καὶ ἀμέμπτως ὑμῖν τοῖς <u>πιστεύουσιν</u> **ἐγενήθημεν,**
    [11] καθάπερ <u>οἴδατε</u>
ὡς ἕνα ἕκαστον ὑμῶν ὡς πατὴρ τέκνα ἑαυτοῦ [12] <u>παρακαλοῦντες</u> ὑμᾶς καὶ <u>παραμυθούμενοι</u> καὶ <u>μαρτυρόμενοι</u>, εἰς τὸ <u>περιπατεῖν</u> ὑμᾶς ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ <u>καλοῦντος</u> ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλείαν καὶ δόξαν.

Thematic Unit 4
[13] Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ==ἡμεῖς== **εὐχαριστοῦμεν** τῷ θεῷ ἀδιαλείπτως,
    ὅτι <u>παραλαβόντες</u> λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ' ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ <u>ἐδέξασθε</u> οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων
ἀλλὰ
    καθὼς ἀληθῶς <u>ἐστὶν</u>
λόγον θεοῦ,
    ὃς καὶ <u>ἐνεργεῖται</u> ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς <u>πιστεύουσιν.</u>

In this new topic-comment unit, the thematic elements foundational to form thematic units include: αὐτοί (2:1), ἡ . . . παράκλησις ἡμῶν (2:3), ὑμεῖς . . . καὶ ὁ θεός (2:10), and

ἡμεῖς (2:13).[16] Among these themes, αὐτοί, ἡ παράκλησις ἡμῶν, and ὑμεῖς καὶ ὁ θεός occupy the prime slot, while ἡμεῖς fills the subsequent position.[17] The prepositional word group διὰ τοῦτο, serving adverbially to offer a causal explanation, is alternatively positioned in the prime slot. In the organization of the thematized elements within this topic-comment unit, the presentation of participants denoted by these thematic elements progresses by initially introducing the Thessalonian recipients (represented by the intensive pronoun αὐτοί). The focus then shifts to an abstract entity, ἡ παράκλησις ἡμῶν, followed by a move to the collective participants, ὑμεῖς καὶ ὁ θεός, ultimately culminating with the senders expressed as ἡμεῖς.

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[16] The inclusion of the pronoun αὐτοί as a thematized element in the first thematic unit is significant. Instead of functioning merely as a personal demonstrative pronoun, it assumes an intensive role, reinforcing the subject of the finite verb οἴδατε. This usage aptly translates as "you yourselves know," emphasizing the subject's self-referential action. The presence of the additional grammatical person in the nominative case, alongside the finite verb, gains importance considering the monolectic nature of Greek verbs. These verbs are capable of conveying comprehensive information, including the grammatical subject, aspect, mood, and voice, sufficient to form complete clauses. Moreover, the preference for the intensively used pronoun αὐτοί over ὑμεῖς intensifies the focus on the participants involved in the process indicated by οἴδατε. Owing to its formal nominative case and its function in intensively indicating the grammatical person of the finite verb οἴδατε in the primary clause, the pronoun αὐτοί can be considered a thematic element. It forms the basis upon which the οἴδατε verbal group operates as a process chain, being semantically aligned with the person of the intensive pronoun. For an in-depth explanation of the monolectic feature of Greek verbs, refer to Porter, *Idioms*, 293–94.

[17] Besides the intensive pronoun αὐτοί, another nominative case noun, ἀδελφοί, is present in the first thematic unit. Although in the nominative case, ἀδελφοί here is not used in the conventional sense, such as denoting the subject of a clause or forming an absolute nominal clause to specify the nominal idea. Instead, in this thematic unit, it functions for direct address, to which some might refer as the vocative case. However, considering that in Greek, there is no distinction in the plural form between nominative and vocative cases in any declension, ἀδελφοί in its plural nominative form is better understood as the nominative of address. J. P. Louw notes, "the nominative, in contradistinction to the vocative, is less exclamative, less direct, more reserved and formal because it merely states the nominative idea" ("Linguistic Theory," 80). Drawing upon Louw's distinction, the ἀδελφοί word group in the first thematic unit assumes an exclamative, direct address function, while the nominative idea in the clause complex is conveyed by the intensive pronoun αὐτοί, reinforcing the grammatical subject of the verbal group οἴδατε. Therefore, ἀδελφοί, despite its nominative case as a formal feature, is not a thematic element. Instead, it functions as a discourse marker designed to single out a person or persons for address. Typically, it is a grammatically unattached element that specifically marks the relationship between the speaker and the addressee. See also Porter and O'Donnell, "Vocative Case," 47–48; Porter, *Idioms*, 86–88.

Compared to the previous topic-comment unit, this unit predominantly centers on themes related to the letter senders and the Thessalonian recipients. Once the primary participants have been established as the Pauline mission team and the Thessalonian recipients within the contextual parameter of the tenor of this discourse, in this topic-comment unit, God emerges as the sole secondary participant, collectively thematized alongside the Thessalonian recipients. Furthermore, the second thematic unit, which focuses on the substantive nominal word group, ἡ παράκλησις ἡμῶν, stands out as the most detailed and complex, marked by a wider array of process chains than its counterparts. Hence, this topic-comment unit seems to invest substantial effort into clarifying the nature of ἡ παράκλησις ἡμῶν which the senders have bestowed to the Thessalonian believers.

Particularly, when παράκλησις is established as the thematized element, serving as a key lexicogrammatical item in forming thematic unit 2, and with subsequent rhematic elements contributing to its elaboration, this nominal word group can be interpreted as extending beyond its lexical meanings, ranging from "encouragement, exhortation" to "appeal, request" and even to "comfort, consolation." Within this specific thematic unit, παράκλησις acquires additional, nuanced meanings. This is particularly the case since the substantival nominal word group τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, which occurs three times within this unit, is employed as part of the rhematic elements that enriches the meaning of the thematized element, παράκλησις (2:4; 2:8; 2:9).[18] Furthermore, the verbs λαλοῦμεν, μεταδοῦναι, and ἐκηρύξαμεν serve as predicators for εὐαγγέλιον, contributing to the co-textual

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[18] Also, in the immediately preceding thematic unit 1, the same nominal word group τὸ εὐαγγέλιον is used, which refers to the Pauline mission team's initial communication of the gospel to the Thessalonians (2:2).

understanding of παράκλησις within this thematic unit. Therefore, one might prudently

infer that ἡ παράκλησις ἡμῶν may denote the multifaceted nature of the Pauline mission

team's proclamation of the gospel to the Thessalonians. This suggests that the preaching

of the gospel message is characterized not only by its didactic and evangelistic delivery

but also by its encouraging and exhortative aspects.[19]

Ideational Meaning

The processes constituting the mainline of this letter-type discourse predominantly occur

within thematic unit 2 of this topic-comment unit, followed by thematic unit 4. The

processes depicted as ongoing and in progress by the imperfective aspect verb, thereby

carrying the mainline of discourse include: λαλοῦμεν (2:4), εὐδοκοῦμεν (2:8), and

μνημονεύετε (2:9). The letter senders are featured as the primary participants in the first

two processes, assuming the role of sayer for the verbal process λαλοῦμεν, with its

verbiage describing their orientation to please God, not people, and of senser for the

mental process εὐδοκοῦμεν, as those who are pleased to share with the Thessalonian

recipients not only the gospel of God but also their own lives. The Thessalonian

recipients are characterized as the primary participants in the mental process denoted by

μνημονεύετε, serving as the senser of the process. This process is construed by the letter

senders for addressing an internal state experienced by the recipients, involving the

recollection of the church founders' labor and hardship.

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[19] For a similar view of interpreting παράκλησις as referring to Paul's missionary preaching in this passage, see Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*, 134.

Another mainline element of discourse is represented by the imperfective aspect

εὐχαριστοῦμεν within thematic unit 4. Notably, the same process εὐχαριστοῦμεν in the

preceding topic-comment unit functions as a rheme to elaborate on the theme of the χάρις

καὶ εἰρήνη greeting at the beginning of the letter. This rhematic expansion serves to affirm

the ongoing relational bond between the letter senders and the recipients and to

assertively state the commendable status and reputation of the Thessalonian believers'

faith. On the other hand, within this topic-comment unit, the same process is used to

provide a detailed description of the thematized letter senders. Its primary rhematic role is

to highlight their gratitude for the Thessalonians' acceptance of their words and their

awareness of the letter senders' integrity, innocence, hardship, and labor, especially

during their time with them in the founding of the church.[20]

Alongside the processes depicted in the imperfective aspect within this topic-

comment unit, processes in the perfective aspect are also present in several primary

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[20] Some scholars who analyze the so-called multiple thanksgiving remarks in 1 Thess 1:2 and 2:13 tend to believe that the letter's thanksgiving section is expanded from 1:2 to 2:13, or possibly even to 3:13. This view is based on the typical structure of Pauline letters, where the thanksgiving section follows the opening and salutation and precedes the main body of the letter, marked by a fixed formulaic thanksgiving expression. Consequently, they argue that the thanksgiving statement in 1 Thess 2:13 should be considered part of an extended thanksgiving section beginning from 1:2. See Lambrecht, "Thanksgivings in 1 Thessalonians 1–3," 161–62; Furnish, *1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians*, 25. For a scholarly survey of the multiple thanksgivings in 1 Thessalonians, refer to Best, *Thessalonians,* 33–35. This study posits that each finite verbal expression for thanksgiving, though similar in form and accompanied by subordinate ὅτι clauses signifying further reasons or contents for thanksgiving, is individualized by the themes they elaborate on as rhematic elements. The first thanksgiving in 1 Thess 1:2 primarily acts as a rheme to augment the meaning related to personal relations between the epistolary participants. The thanksgiving remark particularly achieves this by stating the reasons for gratitude derived from the Thessalonians' reputation and commendable reports. The second thanksgiving remark in 1 Thess 2:13 supports the thematized senders who have construed themselves as unblemished and upright. It does so by expressing gratitude for the recipients' comprehensive understanding of such character and qualified status of the senders. It is noteworthy that, unlike the first thanksgiving, the second is in the subsequent slot, with the prepositional phrase in the prime slot offering a causal explanation for the earlier discussion about the recipients' knowledge of the senders' integrity and innocent character. Thus, it is plausible to suggest that identical thanksgiving expressions could serve different rhematic functions, supporting and expanding the meaning inherent in the thematized elements, and aligning with the central focus of each topic-comment unit.

clauses. These include ἐγενήθημεν, appearing three times in 2:5, 2:7, and 2:10, and ἐκηρύξαμεν in 2:9, each conveyed as complete and whole through the perfective aspect in the aorist tense-form. The primary participants in these processes are the letter senders. They fulfill the role of existent in the existential process ἐγενήθημεν, which portrays the senders as subsisting with integrity and innocence in their word and pastoral care before God and the Thessalonian believers. They also assume the role of sayer in the verbal process ἐκηρύξαμεν, characterized by their preaching of the gospel while working day and night among the Thessalonians.

The process depicted as a contoured or complex state of affairs through the stative aspect in the perfect tense-form, occurring in the primary clause, includes οἴδατε (2:1).[21] As the primary participants of this mental process, the Thessalonian believers are construed as possessing comprehensive knowledge concerning the details of the Pauline mission team. This encompasses their arrival among the Thessalonians and their endeavors to preach the gospel to them, enduring suffering and affliction at Philippi. Though not in the primary clauses, a number of processes in the stative aspect occur throughout this topic-comment unit. A significant observation is that, apart from γέγονεν (2:1) in the subordinate clause within thematic unit 1 and δεδοκιμάσμεθα (2:4) in the comparative clause within thematic unit 2, all verbs in the stative aspect within the subordinate clauses are οἴδατε (2:2; 2:5; 2:10).

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[21] For a discussion of the semantic weight of οἶδα in the perfect tense-form derived from its markedness and hence prominence in comparison to γινώσκω (or other words related to knowledge), refer to Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 281–87.

As observed, when the Thessalonians are depicted as the primary participants of the related processes within this topic-comment unit, they are consistently portrayed as assuming the role of senser of the mental processes. Through these mental processes, the Thessalonian recipients are characterized as those possessing knowledge and retaining memory of the integrity of the Pauline mission team and their arduous labor during their time with them. In contrast, the letter senders, when portrayed as the primary participants in the mental processes, are construed as those who experience internal states of pleasure and gratitude towards the Thessalonian believers. This is attributed to the believers' awareness and acceptance of both the senders and their proclamation of the gospel.

In sum, this topic-comment unit presents the uprightness and guilelessness of Paul and his co-senders in their preaching of the gospel and pastoral care towards the Thessalonian believers as background material. These qualities are evident during their initial missionary preaching and church founding among the Thessalonians. Notably, this background material, conveyed using perfective aspect verbs (ἐγενήθημεν and ἐκηρύξαμεν), occurs intensively in thematic unit 2. Based on this supporting background material, in the same thematic unit 2, the senders—construed as those who communicated the gospel to the Thessalonians (λαλοῦμεν) and were pleased to share it with them (εὐδοκοῦμεν)—along with the Thessalonians actively remembering these events (μνημονεύετε), are presented as foreground material.[22] Also, the act of thanksgiving by

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[22] For discussions on interpreting verbal tense-forms in various temporal contexts, refer to Porter, *Idioms*, 28–45. Considering that this topic-comment unit primarily focuses on reminding the Thessalonians of the initial missionary work by the senders, the verbs λαλοῦμεν and εὐδοκοῦμεν could be interpreted as implying actions undertaken during the senders' time with the Thessalonians. The verb μνημονεύετε may suggest the Thessalonian believers' ongoing act of remembering the senders' presence and activities among them. In this regard, it is indicative that among the verbs depicting the past actions of the senders in Thessalonica (λαλοῦμεν, ἐγενήθημεν, εὐδοκοῦμεν, and ἐκηρύξαμεν), particularly in thematic unit 2, the verbs λαλοῦμεν and εὐδοκοῦμεν are presented as more foregrounded compared to the others, signifying them as

the senders, on account of the knowledge the Thessalonians possess regarding the senders' qualifications characterized by innocence and integrity, is presented as foreground material in thematic unit 4 (εὐχαριστοῦμεν). These contribute to the mainline of the letter, which is characterized by the use of imperfective aspect verbs. The stative aspect verbs in the perfect tense predominantly depict the Thessalonian believers' comprehensive knowledge concerning the Pauline mission team's innocence and integrity (οἴδατε). This serves as the frontground material in this topic-comment unit, thereby bringing to the forefront the mutual understanding and trust between the Pauline mission team and the Thessalonian community.

<div align="center">Interpersonal Meaning</div>

As previously discussed, this topic-comment unit primarily focuses on the representation of relationships between the primary participants, the senders and the Thessalonian recipients, as viewed from the perspective of the tenor of discourse, and seldom includes secondary participants. God emerges as the only secondary participant explicitly mentioned who engages in interactions with the primary participants. These interactions are depicted through varied grammatical structures: God is portrayed as the specified agent in the passive voice clause (2:4), as the subject of actions in the nominative case (2:5; 2:10), and as the recipient of actions in the dative case (2:13). Thus, unlike the first topic-comment unit that introduces and involves various participatory figures, this unit primarily focuses on these three entities—the senders, the Thessalonian recipients, and God—as the central figures in the interaction.[23]

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the mainline of the letter.

[23] Of course, besides these three participatory figures, other secondary participants are introduced

Due to the nature of the discourse type of a letter, which is unilaterally communicated by the author, the nature, attributes, and interactive roles of the participants are those construed by the authorial figures through linguistic choices relevant to the context of situation they are constructing. In this topic-comment unit, concerning the depiction of the Thessalonian recipients, a salient feature is the manner in which the senders enhance their stature and role. They are characterized as individuals who confirm or attest to the uprightness and guileless nature of the church founders, paralleling God's own role in this validation. For instance, in 2:5, when the senders speak of their blamelessness in delivering the gospel, they invoke the testimony of God and the Thessalonian recipients within parallel parenthetical clauses (καθὼς οἴδατε and θεὸς μάρτυς). Furthermore, in 2:10, when the senders revisit their integrity in providing pastoral care to the Thessalonian believers, they position both the recipients and God as witnesses to their upright actions (ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες καὶ ὁ θεός).

However, such intra-linguistically established social roles between the senders and the recipients do not guarantee that the senders, adopting a stance of humility, offer any excuses to the Thessalonian believers.[24] In other words, as depicted in 2:13, the

in this topic-comment unit, such as the apostles of Christ (Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι) and a nursing mother (τροφός) with her children (τέκνα). However, their involvement in the interactions is lesser in degree since they are invoked primarily in comparative phrases as a way of enriching the perception of the relational dynamics between the primary participants.

[24] Many scholars interpret 1 Thess 2:1–12 as a defensive or apologetic response to opposition that emerged within the Thessalonian church. This opposition may have been fueled by accusations concerning Paul's personality or his failure to return to the church following his expulsion by the authorities. However, despite the absence of explicit language expressing refutation of such accusations in this passage, the senders' emphasis on their innocence and integrity is often interpreted as a form of self-defense against any potential criticism. Furthermore, by isolating the thanksgiving remark in 2:13 from 2:1–12, they render the passage as a mere excuse by Paul to address the accusations. However, upon considering the thematic elements and their organizational structures, it becomes evident that the topic-comment unit includes 2:13, starting with the καί διὰ τοῦτο complex word group, as an integral part of this unit. It serves as a concluding remark for the discussion about their innocence and integrity, which inspired the Thessalonians to willingly accept the gospel as delivered by Paul. For representative works arguing for 1 Thess 2:1–12 as a form of

senders believe that their exemplary conduct—characterized by innocence, integrity, and blamelessness—has inspired the Thessalonian believers to embrace the gospel they preached during their time among the Thessalonians. At the same time, the Thessalonian believers accepted the gospel preached by the senders as the word of God, not merely as words from men. As the senders themselves articulate in 2:1, this acceptance occurred despite them facing significant afflictions and abusive treatment in Philippi prior to their arrival in Thessalonica. Hence, the extensive discussion of the virtuous and impeccable character of the senders, coupled with the depiction of the Thessalonian recipients as witnesses to this conduct alongside God, serves as a poignant reminder of the excellence within the reciprocal relationship between the senders and the church. Building upon this foundation, the senders implicitly convey their commitment to ongoing pastoral ministry, even in the absence of physical proximity to the Thessalonians, facilitated through this mode of letter communication.

In terms of the grammatical mood-forms and their semantic attitudes, which reflect the interpersonal actions of the language user through the choice of grammatical verbal structures, all primary clauses within this topic-comment unit are expressed in the indicative mood, signifying an assertive attitude. In this topic-comment unit, the senders assertively state that the recipients are fully aware of their approach to the Thessalonians, enduring sufferings and afflictions, and still remember their labor and hard work during their time with them. The senders firmly declare that their preaching of the gospel was aimed at pleasing God, emphasizing their existential status as innocent and blameless,

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apologetic self-defense, refer to Crook, "Paul's Riposte," 153–63; Kim, "Paul's Entry," 519–42; Weima, "Apologetic Function," 73–99.

akin to infants cared for by a nursing mother.[25] They also affirm their gratitude to God for the Thessalonians' acceptance of the gospel as the word of God, as preached by the senders.

The senders' grammatical choices of the indicative mood-forms for depicting their existential status and the Thessalonians' awareness of it are perceived as factual realities from the senders' viewpoint. This topic-comment ultimately signifies the establishment of a credible and respectful relationship between the senders and the Thessalonians, grounded in a mutual recognition of virtue and truth.

Textual Meaning

The semantic coherence of this topic-comment unit can be established by the connective thread running between the thematic units, ensuring a clear and cohesive progression of ideas. This topic-comment unit demonstrates a connection with the preceding one, as evidenced by the use of the same complex word group εἴσοδον . . . πρὸς ὑμᾶς (1:9) and the commencement with the post-positive inferential or explanatory conjunction γάρ.

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[25] The debate concerning the correct rendering of 1 Thess 2:7 centers on whether the verse should be rendered as "we were gentle (ἤπιοι) among you" or "we were infants (νήπιοι) among you." Notably, virtually all standard English translations adopt the former option, including the KJV, NRSV, NEB, NIV (1984), NASB, NAB, NJB, REB, and ESV. However, it is worth noting that exceptions to this consensus exist, including the TNIV, NIV (2011), and NET translations. This study advocates for adopting the νήπιοι reading as the proper option over ἤπιοι for several reasons. First, there is stronger external evidence supporting νήπιοι over ἤπιοι. Second, the discussion of the claim of the innocent character of the Pauline mission team to the Thessalonians is likewise developed within the topic-comment unit, especially in the preceding ἐγενήθημεν clause. Additionally, from a grammatical perspective, the primary clause in which the lexical item in question is located is elaborated by the subordinating comparative clause in which the parallel item τέκνα is used. Therefore, this verse could be rendered as "we were infants among you, as if a nursing mother takes care of her children." In this metaphor, Paul and his co-senders are not referred to as the nursing mother (τροφός) but as the children (τέκνα), paralleled with the infants (νήπιοι), both of which highlight their innocent nature characterized by not showing words of flattery and pretext for greed, and not even seeking authoritative stature as the apostle of Christ over the Thessalonians. For further scholarly discussions on this issue, refer to Asso, "I Thess., II 7," 233–34; Malherbe, "'Gentile as a Nurse'," 203–17; Weima, "'But We Became Infants Among You'," 547–64; McNeel, *Paul as Infant and Nursing Mother*.

This conjunction signifies support for the previously presented material. Thus, the first thematic unit contributes to creating a new semantic environment by initially expanding or elaborating on the Pauline mission team's entrance among the Thessalonians, briefly mentioned in the last thematic unit of the previous topic-comment unit, and subsequently shifting its emphasis to the nature of this entrance, to be recollected by the recipients.

Using γάρ and the complex nominal word group ἡ παράκλησις ἡμῶν, which is semantically linked with τὸ εὐαγγέλιον mentioned in the previous thematic unit, thematic unit 2 serves to further advance the discourse by providing a more comprehensive description of the manner and disposition with which the senders communicated the gospel to the Thessalonians. Additionally, it asserts that the Thessalonians continue to remember these qualitative aspects of the senders. Subsequently, in thematic unit 3, the senders elevate the Thessalonian recipients to the status of witnesses, alongside God, to these qualities characterized by the actions and mindsets of the senders involved in preaching the gospel and providing pastoral care. This emphatically reinforces the genuineness of their conduct in their interactions with the Thessalonians, confirming their sincerity and integrity.

Employing the conjunctive device to connect clause complexes and utilizing the prepositional word group διὰ τοῦτο in an adverbial capacity to provide a causal explanation, thematic unit 4 elucidates the letter senders' act of expressing thanksgiving once again. This is achieved by presenting the reasons why the Thessalonians received their gospel message, which emanated from the sincerity and integrity of the senders. Therefore, this thematic unit functions as a concluding statement for this topic-comment unit, symbolizing the reciprocal relationship between the senders and recipients. The

senders imparted the gospel with genuine integrity and pure intent, leading the recipients to embrace their message as the word of God, rather than merely human words.

Regarding linguistic highlighting within this topic-comment unit, it is particularly notable that the senders accentuate the Thessalonians' recognition of the senders' qualitative characteristics in their gospel proclamation and pastoral encouragement. This focus is achieved through the use of the stative verbal aspect οἴδατε, consistently employed to present the Thessalonian recipients as primary participants in the related processes. Additionally, another mental process, μνημονεύετε, in which the Thessalonians are the primary participants, is utilized as foreground material. Notably, in thematic unit 1, the stative aspect οἴδατε occurs twice within a single clause complex: once in the primary clause and again in the subordinate comparative clause. Along with the repeated uses of the stative οἴδατε verbs, this thematic unit also includes the stative aspect verb γέγονεν, signifying the impact of the foundational missionary endeavor undertaken by the senders. Furthermore, in this thematic unit, the subject of the process οἴδατε is grammaticalized in the intensive pronoun being positioned in the prime slot. This is coupled with the nominative case of address, ἀδελφοί, thereby attracting the readers' attention. Thus, this topic-comment unit highlights the knowledgeable status of the Thessalonians regarding the qualitative attributes of the senders and their resulting impact as the most prominent material.

Considering the analytical outcomes pertaining to the language usage in this topic-comment unit, the topic can be defined as the reflective interactions between Paul, together with his co-senders, and the Thessalonian recipients. The comment develops

these interpersonal relations by focusing on the shared experiences from their time

together in Thessalonica.

Paul's Account of His Ongoing Pastoral Ministry in His Absence from the Thessalonians (1 Thess 2:14—3:8)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1

[14] ὑμεῖς γὰρ μιμηταὶ **ἐγενήθητε**, ἀδελφοί, τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν οὐσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,

    ὅτι τὰ αὐτὰ ἐπάθετε καὶ ὑμεῖς ὑπὸ τῶν ἰδίων συμφυλετῶν

        καθὼς καὶ αὐτοὶ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων

            [15] τῶν καὶ τὸν κύριον ἀποκτεινάντων Ἰησοῦν καὶ τοὺς προφήτας καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐκδιωξάντων, καὶ θεῷ μὴ ἀρεσκόντων, καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἐναντίων,

            [16] κωλυόντων ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἔθνεσιν λαλῆσαι ἵνα σωθῶσιν, εἰς τὸ ἀναπληρῶσαι αὐτῶν τὰς ἁμαρτίας πάντοτε.

    ἔφθασεν δὲ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἡ ὀργὴ εἰς τέλος.

Thematic Unit 2

[17] Ἡμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἀπορφανισθέντες ἀφ' ὑμῶν πρὸς καιρὸν ὥρας, προσώπῳ οὐ καρδίᾳ, περισσοτέρως **ἐσπουδάσαμεν** τὸ πρόσωπον ὑμῶν ἰδεῖν ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ.

    [18] διότι ἠθελήσαμεν ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς,

    ἐγὼ μὲν Παῦλος καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δίς,

    καὶ ἐνέκοψεν ἡμᾶς ὁ Σατανᾶς.

Thematic Unit 3

[19] τίς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐλπὶς ἢ χαρὰ ἢ στέφανος καυχήσεως—

Thematic Unit 4

ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς—ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ;

Thematic Unit 5

[20] ὑμεῖς γάρ **ἐστε** ἡ δόξα ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ χαρά.

[3.1] Διὸ μηκέτι στέγοντες **εὐδοκήσαμεν** καταλειφθῆναι ἐν Ἀθήναις μόνοι,

[2] καὶ **ἐπέμψαμεν** Τιμόθεον, τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν [3] τὸ μηδένα σαίνεσθαι ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν ταύταις.

Thematic Unit 6
αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε
    ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα·

    ⁴ καὶ γὰρ ὅτε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἦμεν,
προελέγομεν ὑμῖν
    ὅτι μέλλομεν θλίβεσθαι,
        καθὼς καὶ ἐγένετο
        καὶ οἴδατε.

Thematic Unit 7
⁵ διὰ τοῦτο κἀγὼ μηκέτι στέγων ἔπεμψα εἰς τὸ γνῶναι τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν,
    μή πως ἐπείρασεν ὑμᾶς ὁ πειράζων
    καὶ εἰς κενὸν γένηται ὁ κόπος ἡμῶν.

    ⁶ Ἄρτι δὲ ἐλθόντος Τιμοθέου πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀφ᾽ ὑμῶν
    καὶ εὐαγγελισαμένου ἡμῖν τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ὑμῶν, καὶ ὅτι ἔχετε
    μνείαν ἡμῶν ἀγαθὴν πάντοτε ἐπιποθοῦντες ἡμᾶς ἰδεῖν καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς,
⁷ διὰ τοῦτο παρεκλήθημεν, ἀδελφοί, ἐφ᾽ ὑμῖν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ ἀνάγκῃ καὶ θλίψει ἡμῶν
διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν πίστεως,
    ⁸ ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν
    ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ.

This topic-comment unit is characterized by seven thematic units. These units emerge

from the occurrence of seven thematized elements, each represented by a fully

grammaticalized subject in the nominative case of the primary clauses. They are

presented in sequence as follows: ὑμεῖς (2:14), ἡμεῖς (2:17), τίς (2:19), ὑμεῖς (2:19), ὑμεῖς

(2:20), αὐτοί (3:3), and κἀγώ (3:5). Similar to the previous topic-comment unit, this unit

is characterized by the concentrated thematization of personal pronouns in the first and

second person plural. In addition, the intensive pronoun αὐτοί, serving to intensify the

grammatical person of the verb οἴδατε, recurs as the thematized element in this topic-

comment unit, just as in the previous one. However, the current topic-comment unit

differs from the preceding one by featuring the interrogative pronoun τίς and the first

person singular pronoun κἀγώ, which indicate the primary author, Paul, as the thematized elements. Moreover, in this topic-comment unit, apart from the thematic element τίς used in the rhetorical question, the thematization pattern is exclusive to the primary participants, namely, the letter senders and the Thessalonian recipients. Secondary participants are not thematized here.

Among the thematized elements, ὑμεῖς (2:14, 19, 20), ἡμεῖς (2:17), τίς (2:19), and αὐτοί (3:3) occupy the prime slot within their respective clause complexes. Only the thematic element κἀγώ (3:5) is positioned in the subsequent slot, allowing the prepositional word group διὰ τοῦτο, which signifies a causal explanation for what was previously discussed, to occupy the prime slot. This thematizing pattern, in which the last thematic unit of its topic-comment unit positions the personal pronoun in the subsequent slot and διὰ τοῦτο in the prime slot, is identical to that of the previous topic-comment unit.

Hence, it can be stated that this topic-comment unit predominantly revolves around thematic elements embodied by the central communicative figures, namely, the senders and the recipients, much akin to the preceding topic-comment unit. Additionally, this unit resembles the previous one, as both culminate their respective units with a similar thematizing pattern. Nonetheless, the thematic focus in this unit becomes more refined, narrowing its purview to the communicative participants compared to the previous unit. This refinement is substantiated by the deliberate omission of secondary participants as themes and by the introduction of the first person singular pronoun as a thematic element. The primary concern of this topic-comment unit is to present the

senders and recipients as themes and subsequently elaborate on each of them using various rhematic elements from the senders' own perspective.

Ideational Meaning

The most notable characteristic in the current topic-comment unit, especially in relation to the portrayal of processes in aspectual semantics, is the frequent use of perfective aspect verbs in the primary clauses that form the supportive background material for the mainline of the letter. Accordingly, the topic-comment unit primarily reflects a narrative type of discourse that depicts the experiences as being whole and complete from the authors' perspectives.[26]

The non-background material in this topic-comment unit includes προελέγομεν, which is in the imperfective aspect and grammaticalized in the imperfect tense-form (3:4), as well as οἴδατε, which is in the stative aspect and expressed in the perfect tense-form (3:3). Since προελέγομεν is in the imperfect tense, a semantic nuance is added to its aspectual sense of being imperfective; specifically, it implies a remoteness in comparison to the imperfective aspect expressed in the present tense-form. Regarding the occurrence of the imperfect tense-form with an imperfective aspect, surrounded by the dominant use of perfective aspect verbs, thereby forming a narrative-type discourse, Porter and O'Donnell note that in such cases, this aspect is employed as a remote foreground narrative tense-form.[27] Considering their explanation, the imperfective aspect προελέγομεν serves as foreground material in relation to the narrative thread, which is

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[26] See also Yoon, *Galatians*, 193.
[27] Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 147.

characterized by the prevalent uses of perfective aspect verbs in this topic-comment unit,
rather than being the foreground material that contributes to the mainline of the letter.

Another non-background material is the instance of ἐστέ (2:20), which is termed
as an aspectually vague verb that does not provide a meaningful choice of aspect and thus
does not carry the semantic weight of perfective, imperfective, or stative verbal aspect.[28]
However, the εἰμί verb can be considered as foreground material in this topic-comment
unit to some extent because of its co-textual environment. The clause in which the verb is
used is grammatically and semantically linked with thematic units 3 and 4, which do not
directly contribute to the progress of the narrative thread conveyed by the perfective
aspect verbs. Instead, they appear as a set of rhetorical questions and answers articulated
by the senders, to the extent of being seen as a parenthetical insertion that provides
additional insight or emphasis within the broader discourse. For this reason, this study
cautiously considers ἐστέ as foreground material within this topic-comment unit and also
acknowledges its contribution to the progression of the mainline of the letter, even though
this is not explicitly established on the basis of verbal aspect.[29]

The perfective aspect verb, taking the Thessalonian recipients as its primary
participant, occurs only once in ἐγενήθητε (2:14) within thematic unit 1. The existential
process serves as a rheme to elaborate on the theme ὑμεῖς, construing the Thessalonian
recipients as becoming imitators of the Christian believers in Judea. This construal is
marked by their endurance of suffering from their own countrymen, similar to the

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[28] Porter, *Idioms*, 25.

[29] Porter and O'Donnell remark that aspectually vague verbs, such as εἰμί, do not gain prominence based on verbal aspect alone, but may achieve prominence through other means. Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 154.

experiences of those in the Judean church at the hands of Jewish persecutors. However, the portrayal of the two parties as similar to each other extends beyond the experiential relationship between the Thessalonian and Judean believers. It also encompasses the likeness between the Thessalonian persecutors and their Jewish counterparts. This suggests that just as the Thessalonian and Judean Christians are alike in suffering at the hands of their regional communities, the Thessalonian persecutors and the Jewish persecutors are similarly engaged in oppressing the Christian believers within their respective regions. Thus, just as the Jewish persecutors are depicted through a series of participial clauses as those who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets (ἀποκτεινάντων), drove out the apostles (ἐκδιωξάντων), displeased God (μὴ ἀρεσκόντων), were hostile to all people (ἐναντίων in the adjectival form), and hindered the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles (κωλυόντων), so too are the Thessalonian persecutors suggested to engage in similar actions. Through linguistic elements such as μιμηταί, the attributively used personal pronoun in τὰ αὐτὰ ἐπάθετε, and emphatically used καί in καὶ ὑμεῖς and καὶ αὐτοί with the comparative conjunction καθώς, the Thessalonian persecutors are implied to mirror the Jewish persecutors by persecuting the Thessalonian believers and forcibly expelling the Pauline mission team.

Therefore, thematic unit 1, by depicting the existential status of the Thessalonians and further construing the experiences shared by the Christians in Thessalonica and Judea in terms of their sufferings and persecutions, provides crucial background material. This elucidates why the Pauline mission team and the Thessalonian believers are currently

physically separated from each other, a situation the senders construe as being orphaned

(ἀπορφανισθέντες) in the subsequent thematic unit.[30]

From this background material as part of the narrative thread, the senders

continue the narrative by shifting the focus to themselves, expressing an eager desire to

see the Thessalonian recipients face to face (ἐσπουδάσαμεν). They sent Timothy to the

Thessalonian church in place of Paul (ἐπέμψαμεν), who remained in Athens due to

hindrances attributed to Satan (εὐδοκήσαμεν καταλειφθῆναι). Subsequently, they are now

comforted by Timothy's positive reports regarding the Thessalonians' faith

(παρεκλήθημεν).

Particularly, the current topic-comment unit features Paul, represented by his

proper name in 2:18, as the primary participant in the material process ἔπεμψα. The

verb's use in the singular form, along with thematizing the first person singular pronoun,

may serve to intensify the portrayal of his eager desire for ongoing concern and pastoral

care for the Thessalonian believers, despite the barriers hindering him from doing so.

Furthermore, it depicts the Thessalonians as fully aware of Paul's continued mode of

pastoral care (οἴδατε), notably highlighted by his decision to send Timothy to them in the

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[30] Some critical scholars, notably Baur and Birger A. Pearson, perceive the passage of 1 Thess 2:14–16, inclusive of 2:13, as a post-Pauline interpolation, citing various reasons for this view. A primary argument against its Pauline authorship, often cited, concerns its apparently anti-Semitic tone, which seems to contradict the sentiments expressed in Rom 9–11. Contrary to this viewpoint, the analytical results of this study reveal that the passage does not, in fact, express an anti-Semitic sentiment. Rather, it delineates the Jewish persecutors as culpable for the tribulations endured by Christians in Judea. In a parallel depiction, it intimates that the Thessalonian persecutors share similarities in their actions against Christians in Thessalonica. The core intent, especially in referencing the Jewish persecutors, is to elucidate the reasons for the current physical separation of the senders from the Thessalonian church. This context serves as a foundation for delineating the continued pastoral care they intend to provide for the church, notwithstanding their inability to return in person. See Baur, "Two Epistles to the Thessalonians," 87–88; Pearson, "1 Thessalonians 2:13–16," 79–94. For the post-Pauline interpolation view based on linguistic observations, see Schmidt, "1 Thess 2:13–16," 269–79.

event that he cannot return to them in person as of now. From the senders' perspective, the Thessalonians' knowledge of this stems from the senders' anticipations of afflictions they had discussed beforehand while they were in Thessalonica (προελέγομεν). The two processes, depicting the Thessalonians' knowledge and the senders' forthtelling, are presented with stative and imperfective aspects, respectively. The latter, being in the imperfect tense-form to reflect remoteness, thus provides the foreground material within the narrative thread depicted by the consistently used perfective aspect verbs.

Interpersonal Meaning

In a manner akin to the preceding topic-comment unit, the authors here exhibit a tendency to represent themselves in an exceptionally favorable manner with respect to the believers of Thessalonica. While in the preceding topic-comment unit the senders emphasize their existential status as innocent and blameless during their time among the Thessalonians, in this new topic-comment unit, they shift focus to their continued actions in pastoral care and concern for the Thessalonian believers following their expulsion by the Thessalonian persecutors.

In this topic-comment unit, a notable shift occurs from the previous pattern of representing the letter's author in plural forms. Here, Paul is singularly introduced as the primary figure, actively involved in the missionary team's sustained guidance and support for the Thessalonians. Paul is mentioned in the first person singular form on two distinct occasions. Initially, he is portrayed using a combination of his proper name and a personal pronoun, highlighting his attempts to revisit the Thessalonian church multiple times (ἐγὼ . . . Παῦλος in 2:18). Subsequently, the text employs a contracted form of the

personal pronoun, merged with the attributively used conjunction καί (κἀγώ in 3:5). This linguistic choice emphasizes Paul's sole responsibility for the decision to send Timothy, representing an alternative approach to providing care for the Thessalonians.

Echoing the previously discussed unit, the current topic-comment unit also presents the Thessalonian believers as thoroughly understanding the senders' state of commitment to them using the stative aspect verb (οἴδατε in 3:3). Specifically, thematic unit 6, characterized by the presence of the verb οἴδατε, additionally recalls the discourses of the senders during their time with the Thessalonians (ἦμεν προελέγομεν in 3:4). Within this framework, the recipients' perception of the senders is closely tied to the activities carried out by the latter during their time with the Thessalonians, reflecting a similar approach as seen in the earlier topic-comment unit. Furthermore, the Thessalonian recipients are portrayed by the senders as akin to the Christians in Judea, emulating them in enduring sufferings and persecutions at the hands of their own countrymen. While the initial topic-comment unit features the senders articulating the positive and commendable qualities of the Thessalonian believers through references to the churches in Macedonia and Achaia, in this instance, they convey similar praiseworthy attributes of the Thessalonians by drawing parallels with the Christians in Judea. Therefore, up to this point, secondary participants identified as believers external to the Thessalonian church are primarily invoked to highlight the admirable traits of the Thessalonian believers.

Excluding the verbless clauses in thematic units 3 and 4, which together form a rhetorical question and its answer posed by the senders, all primary clauses in this topic-comment unit employ indicative mood verbal forms. As a result, the senders frame all interpersonal interactions within an assertive framework, depicting them as matters of

factual reality. Significantly, in articulating the senders' viewpoint on actions involving negative figures as grammatical participants, the consistent use of indicative mood-forms serves to reflect their perception of these events. In the subordinate clauses that illustrate the Thessalonians suffering at their compatriots' hands in 2:14–16, the senders depict wrath as the principal agent in its descent, positioning the countrymen as recipients of this wrath's impact (ἔφθασεν). The depiction of wrath's imposition on the countrymen is articulated in the indicative mood, framing it as a factual reality. In a different subordinate clause, specifically in 2:18, where Paul's persistent efforts to revisit the Thessalonian church are detailed, Satan's interference in thwarting these attempts is likewise portrayed using the indicative mood-form (ἐνέκοψεν). This portrayal may serve to affirm the present realities faced by both Paul and the Thessalonian recipients.

<div align="center">Textual Meaning</div>

The present topic-comment unit is intricately linked to its predecessor via the inferential or explanatory conjunction γάρ. This connection suggests that the clause complex within thematic unit 1 functions as a foundational support for the preceding discourse. The usage of the conjunction γάρ posits a causal relationship, implying that the Thessalonians' acceptance of the gospel message, as delineated in the concluding portion of the preceding topic-comment unit, directly precipitates their subsequent sufferings inflicted by their fellow countrymen.

While maintaining continuity with the preceding text, this topic-comment unit inaugurates a novel semantic environment. It shifts the focus from scrutinizing the qualitative aspects of the Pauline mission team's engagement with the Thessalonians to

highlighting their persistent pastoral dedication and care, despite the current constraints that prevent a personal revisit to the church. After explaining their physical separation through the concept of imitation, the senders proceed to describe how they continue their pastoral work aimed at the Thessalonians, even from outside Thessalonica. The senders, particularly Paul, endeavored to revisit the church multiple times. Motivated by the belief that the Thessalonians represent their hope, joy, and crown of pride, Paul, when circumstances necessitated his stay in Athens, sent Timothy to the Thessalonian church as his representative. Subsequently, Paul is now comforted by Timothy's report, which confirms the Thessalonians' steadfast faith.

This semantic coherence between the thematic units is meticulously upheld through the use of conjunctive devices that grammatically interlink these segments. Notable examples include δέ (2:17; 3:6), γάρ (2:19, 20; 3:3, 4), διό (3:1), καί (3:2, 4), and διὰ τοῦτο (3:5). These linguistic elements act as crucial connectors, ensuring a seamless thematic progression throughout the topic-comment unit.

From a linguistic perspective, thematic unit 6 emerges as a focal point, distinguished by a higher frequency of prominent elements relative to other units. This prominence is marked by the dual presence of stative aspect verbs (οἴδατε) and imperfective aspects in the imperfect tense-form (ἦμεν and προελέγομεν), alongside the strategic placement of the thematized intensive pronoun in the prime slot (αὐτοί). Thematic units 3 to 5 also emerge as a salient feature, distinctly set apart from the adjacent narrative fabric. These units function akin to a parenthetical statement, employing a rhetorical question-and-answer format devised by the senders. This stylistic choice underscores their profound motivation for sustained pastoral care and concern

towards the Thessalonians. Additionally, the strategic placement of all thematized elements in the prime slots within these thematic units not only accentuates their significance but also vividly demonstrates their linguistic prominence.

In light of the array of relevant linguistic elements characterizing this semantically delineated environment, the discernible topic of this unit is the letter senders', especially Paul's, unwavering devotion and attentive care towards the Thessalonian recipients despite the existing constraints against providing such support in a face-to-face setting. The comment that develops this topic is characterized by a succession of tangible actions executed by Paul and his missionary colleagues, seamlessly integrated into a narrative sequence. This is further enhanced by the use of a rhetorical question-and-answer format, effectively emphasizing their foundational motivation for engaging in their ongoing pastoral concern and care for the Thessalonian recipients.

Paul's Intercessory Prayer for the Thessalonians (1 Thess 3:9–13)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1
[9] *τίνα γὰρ εὐχαριστίαν* **δυνάμεθα** *τῷ θεῷ* <u>ἀνταποδοῦναι</u> *περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ χαρᾷ*
   ᾗ <u>χαίρομεν</u> *δι' ὑμᾶς ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν,*
[10] *νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ* <u>δεόμενοι</u> *εἰς τὸ* <u>ἰδεῖν</u> *ὑμῶν τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ*
<u>καταρτίσαι</u> *τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν;*

[11] *Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς* **κατευθύναι** *τὴν ὁδὸν ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς·*

Thematic Unit 2
[12] *ὑμᾶς δὲ ὁ κύριος* **πλεονάσαι**

καὶ **περισσεύσαι** *τῇ ἀγάπῃ εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας,*
   καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς,

¹³ εἰς τὸ <u>στηρίξαι</u> ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἁγιωσύνῃ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ.

The newly established semantic environment, distinct from its predecessor, is primarily characterized by the thematization of secondary participants, in contrast to the primary focus on letter senders and recipients in the earlier context. In this topic-comment unit, the thematic elements include αὐτὸς . . . ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς (3:11) and ὁ κύριος (3:12). This topic-comment unit also distinguishes itself from the preceding one through the re-thematization of divine figures. Notably, in the earlier second topic-comment unit, the divine figure God is thematized in conjunction with the Thessalonian recipients, as elucidated in 2:10. In this topic-comment unit, divine figures are thematized independently, without the involvement of other participants. Additionally, Jesus, interchangeably referred to as "the Lord," is presented as a thematic element for the first time in this topic-comment unit.

Another distinctive feature in the thematization of this topic-comment unit is that the rhematic elements are introduced first, followed by the thematic elements. Given the recurrence of word groups akin to those in the preceding topic-comment unit, such as χαρᾷ, ἰδεῖν, and πρόσωπον, coupled with the conjunction γάρ, some might argue that the clause complex in 3:9–10 should be regarded as part of the narrative that delineates the actions of the senders following their expulsion from Thessalonica. Nevertheless, the semantic connotations conveyed by τίνα . . . εὐχαριστίαν δυνάμεθα τῷ θεῷ (3:9) and δεόμενοι (3:10) are more closely aligned with the semiotic actions of prayer or appeal by the senders to God. Their desire to see the Thessalonian believers in person is explicitly revisited in their plea to God in 3:11, grammaticalized as ὁ θεὸς . . . κατευθύναι τὴν ὁδὸν

ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. Furthermore, the prepositional phrase ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ, introduced in 3:9, reappears in 3:13. Thus, it is more appropriate to view the clause complex of 3:9–11 as an integral part of this topic-comment unit, serving as rhemes that enhance the meaning of the thematized elements, including God and the Lord Jesus.

Among the two thematized elements, αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς occupies the prime slot, thereby becoming the most prominent and foregrounded material in the thematization. On the other hand, another thematized element ὁ κύριος is positioned in a subsequent slot, with ὑμᾶς, the recipients of the action executed by the Lord, being placed in the prime slot.

Ideational Meaning

The verbal word group δυνάμεθα (3:9) is depicted in the imperfective aspect, thereby contributes to the mainline of the letter. The process type of δυνάμεθα is a mental process, with the letter senders as the senser of the process. The phenomenon they perceive is their thankfulness towards God, stemming from the joy experienced due to the Thessalonian recipients. With the rank-shifted participial clause functioning as an adjunct to the primary clause, the senders additionally express that their action with respect to thankfulness is manifested in their prayers to see the Thessalonians face to face.

All other processes that serve as predicates in the primary clauses are depicted in the perfective aspect. These include κατευθύναι (3:11), πλεονάσαι (3:12), and περισσεύσαι (3:12); they collectively form the background material. The process types of all these verbs are classified as material processes. In the first process, God and the Lord Jesus are the primary participants, serving in the capacity of actors. In the latter two processes, the

Lord—indicative of Jesus—serves as the primary participant, also in the role of actor. The goals of these material processes encompass the senders' journey towards the Thessalonian recipients, as well as the spiritual well-being of the Thessalonians, which is characterized by mutual love and a state of blamelessness before God.

Thus, this topic-comment unit is about the senders engaged in prayer, which is construed as an expression of deep gratitude for the immeasurable joy stemming from the Thessalonian believers, coupled with their fervent longing to meet them in person. From the sender's perspective, their prayer is underpinned by confidence in God's ability to guide their journey to the Thessalonians, and in the Lord Jesus' capacity to enhance the Thessalonians' spiritual growth in loving others and maintaining blamelessness before God.

Interpersonal Meaning

Although the divine figures are secondary participants within the contextual parameter of tenor of the Thessalonian discourse, they assume prominent roles and influential positions within this topic-comment unit. Initially, as the senders articulate their prayer and its contents, forming the core ideational component of this topic-comment unit, they emphasize the divine figures by thematizing them and elaborating on their abilities to fulfill the senders' desires and hopes.

Additionally, this topic-comment unit delineates the hierarchical interpersonal roles and relationships among the invoked participants with precision. It positions the divine figures as providers in relation to the senders' desires and aspirations, simultaneously placing both the senders and the recipients in the role of beneficiaries

with respect to the fulfillment granted by the divine figures.[31] Also, this topic-comment unit delineates the hierarchical relationship between the senders and the recipients. It construes the senders as intercessors, petitioning God for the spiritual development of the recipients. Thus, the spiritual benefits bestowed upon the recipients by God are facilitated through the intermediary role of the senders.

The present topic-comment unit distinguishes itself from others through its unique portrayal of semantic attitudes. Except for the employment of the unmarked indicative mood-form in δυνάμεθα, the remaining three verbal groups, serving as predicates for the grammatical subjects that represent the divine figures, are rendered in the optative mood-forms (κατευθύναι, πλεονάσαι, and περισσεύσαι). These forms encapsulate the semantic attitude of projection, intertwined with an element of contingency. Using these optative mood-forms, the senders convey their longing to return to the Thessalonian church and their aspiration for the growth and flourishing of mutual love and holiness among the Thessalonians. Simultaneously, they acknowledge that these desires depend on factors beyond their control, specifically the divine actions of God and Jesus. Again, these optative mood-forms reveal the hierarchical interpersonal relationships between the participants invoked in this topic-comment unit. The senders are portrayed as intermediary figures, positioned between the divine figures and the recipients, imploring God for the spiritual welfare of the Thessalonian believers.

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[31] In the instances where κατευθύναι, πλεονάσαι, and περισσεύσαι express the actions of the divine figures as grammatical subjects, both the senders and the Thessalonian recipients, along with the associated events, are presented as the objects in these processes, indicated by their accusative grammatical forms.

Textual Meaning

By initiating the first thematic unit with the inferential or explanatory conjunction γάρ, this topic-comment unit forges a linkage to its predecessor. In the preceding unit, the senders conclude by discussing Timothy's report, which highlights the Thessalonians' recollection of the Pauline mission team and their unwavering faith despite distress and affliction. Subsequently, at the commencement of the current topic-comment unit, the senders articulate their gratitude, a sentiment evoked by Timothy's positive feedback about the Thessalonians. The senders' boundless gratitude towards the Thessalonian believers has inspired them to fervently pray to God for the opportunity to meet the Thessalonians face to face.

Having outlined these matters in thematic unit 1, the senders shift to imploring God the Father and the Lord Jesus in thematic unit 2, expressing their wishes for the Thessalonians. They do so by thematizing the divine figures and framing their actions within a series of optative mood-forms, thereby lending a wishful tone to their language. Thus, the progression of these thematic units maintains a cohesive and dynamic flow, seamlessly interlinking the senders' expressions of gratitude, fervent prayers, and hopeful aspirations through the thoughtful use of linguistic nuances and mood-forms, which effectively encapsulate the depth of their sentiments and intention.

Regarding linguistic emphasis, the most notable aspect is the consistent use of optative mood-forms. Within the realm of attitudinal semantics, the optative mood-form stands out as the most marked, thereby signifying a frontground in the textual presentation with respect to interpersonal meaning. Another prominent linguistic feature is observed in the thematic element αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς,

which stands out due to the complexity of the participants being thematized, its prime position in the clause, and the employment of the intensive pronoun αὐτός.

Taking into account the pertinent linguistic elements and structures within this topic-comment unit, the topic is characterized by Paul and his associates engaging in intercessory prayer for the Thessalonian believers. The comment supporting this topic is delineated by the senders' construal of God and Jesus, along with their actions that are projected to fulfill their profound desires and yearnings for the Thessalonians.

Paul's Exhortations on Holiness to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 4:1–8)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1
4.1 Λοιπὸν οὖν, ἀδελφοί, **ἐρωτῶμεν** ὑμᾶς

καὶ **παρακαλοῦμεν** ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ,
    ἵνα καθὼς <u>παρελάβετε</u> παρ᾽ ἡμῶν τὸ πῶς <u>δεῖ</u> ὑμᾶς <u>περιπατεῖν</u> καὶ <u>ἀρέσκειν</u>
    θεῷ,
        καθὼς καὶ <u>περιπατεῖτε</u>,
   ἵνα <u>περισσεύητε</u> μᾶλλον.

2 **οἴδατε** γὰρ
   τίνας παραγγελίας <u>ἐδώκαμεν</u> ὑμῖν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ.

3 <mark>τοῦτο</mark> γάρ **ἐστιν** θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ ἁγιασμὸς ὑμῶν, <u>ἀπέχεσθαι</u> ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς πορνείας,
4 <u>εἰδέναι</u> ἕκαστον ὑμῶν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος <u>κτᾶσθαι</u> ἐν ἁγιασμῷ καὶ τιμῇ, 5 μὴ ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας καθάπερ καὶ τὰ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ <u>εἰδότα</u> τὸν θεόν, 6 τὸ μὴ <u>ὑπερβαίνειν</u> καὶ <u>πλεονεκτεῖν</u> ἐν τῷ πράγματι τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ,
   διότι ἔκδικος κύριος περὶ πάντων τούτων,
      καθὼς καὶ <u>προείπαμεν</u> ὑμῖν
      καὶ <u>διεμαρτυράμεθα</u>.

Thematic Unit 2
7 οὐ γὰρ **ἐκάλεσεν** ἡμᾶς <mark>ὁ θεὸς</mark> ἐπὶ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ

ἀλλ᾽ ἐν ἁγιασμῷ.

Thematic Unit 3
⁸τοιγαροῦν ὁ ἀθετῶν οὐκ ἄνθρωπον **ἀθετεῖ**

ἀλλὰ τὸν θεὸν τὸν καὶ <u>διδόντα</u> τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ τὸ ἅγιον εἰς ὑμᾶς.

Comprising three thematic units, this topic-comment unit contains three thematized elements, including τοῦτο (4:3), ὁ θεός (4:7), and ὁ ἀθετῶν (4:8). Among the thematized elements, only τοῦτο in thematic unit 1 is positioned in the prime slot, with other two themes in their respective subsequent slots. Thematic unit 1 is characterized by the introduction of rhematic elements initially, culminating with the presentation of the theme at the unit's end. It is evident that in the first thematic unit, the thematized demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο refers to θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ and ὁ ἁγιασμὸς ὑμῶν. These two abstract entities, connected asyndetically, form a conjoined rhematic element that underpins the theme represented by τοῦτο. Thus, it can be inferred that thematic unit 1 initially unfolds by detailing the processes of both the senders and Thessalonian recipients concerning τοῦτο. It then proceeds to identify τοῦτο as the will of God, specifically referring to the holiness or sanctification of the Thessalonian believers, employing a series of rank-shifted infinitive constructs to elucidate further the nature of the substantives.[32]

Subsequently, the topic-comment unit introduces the secondary participants, ὁ θεός and ὁ ἀθετῶν, by designating them as thematic elements, thus giving rise to two distinct thematic units. The actions of these two thematized participants, as indicated by

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[32] For an in-depth analysis of the infinitive's capacity to function as a modifier, which specifies or defines the element it modifies (be it a word or a phrase), refer to Porter, *Idioms*, 198–99.

finite verbal constructs, are presented as rhematic elements, thereby enriching the meanings of the thematic elements.

Consequently, it becomes apparent that in delivering exhortations about the will of God and holiness to the Thessalonian recipients, the senders accomplish this by thematizing the demonstrative pronoun, which cataphorically refers to these abstract concepts, and the substantival forms of the secondary participants, who serve to further clarify the rationale behind pursuing the moral sanctity.

Ideational Meaning

Of the six finite verbs serving as predicates in the primary clauses, three are expressed in the imperfective aspect using the present tense-form, one in the perfective aspect with the aorist tense-form, and another in the stative aspect via the perfect tense-form. Additionally, there is an aspectually vague verb, ἐστίν.[33] In the progressive sequence of finite verbs in the imperfective aspect, the topic-comment unit initiates with the sender's actions of request and exhortation (ἐρωτῶμεν ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν in 4:1), progresses to the definition of the main subject matter it addresses (τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ ἁγιασμὸς ὑμῶν in 4:3), and culminates in the invocation of a cautionary figure, symbolizing the notion that rejecting this moral teaching equates to a rejection of God Himself (τοιγαροῦν ὁ ἀθετῶν οὐκ ἄνθρωπον ἀθετεῖ ἀλλὰ τὸν θεὸν in 4:8). These verbal

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[33] Owing to its inherent ambiguity in aspectual semantics, the exact aspectuality of ἐστίν in 4:3 remains indeterminate. Yet, within the co-textual framework, predominantly characterized by the imperfective aspect that depicts the senders' exhortatory actions toward the Thessalonian recipients, the ἐστίν verb in this topic-comment unit assumes a crucial role in defining and clarifying what the senders are exhorting, thereby contributing to the development of the mainline of the letter.

constructs, rendered in the imperfective aspect, reflect ongoing and in-progress processes, thereby contributing to the formation of the mainline of the Thessalonian letter.

Within the co-textual framework of verbs in the imperfective aspect, the sender's remark concerning the recipients' knowledge of the upcoming topic is expressed in the stative aspect (οἴδατε γὰρ τίνας παραγγελίας ἐδώκαμεν ὑμῖν in 4:2). As the main discussion unfolds, the senders, by employing the stative aspect, emphasize the recipients' comprehension, particularly regarding the moral imperative to abstain from sexual immorality. Given the senders' statement about the purpose of their exhortation, encapsulated in the ἵνα clause that articulates their wish for the Thessalonian recipients to excel further (ἵνα περισσεύητε μᾶλλον in 4:1), it appears likely that the senders intend to reinforce the Thessalonians' current commitment to the teachings of sanctified moral conduct being discussed.

The perfective aspect is applied to depict God's calling of the Thessalonian believers towards holiness rather than impurity (οὐ γὰρ ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ ἀλλ' ἐν ἁγιασμῷ in 4:7). Alongside the inferential or explanatory γάρ conjunction, which supports the previously discussed topic of sexual morality, the senders elucidate the rationale behind the Thessalonians' pursuit of a sexually sanctified life. This rationale is rooted in God's divine calling, serving as a fundamental backdrop for their discussion.

In the relationship between participant types and processes, the senders predominantly assume the role of sayer in the verbal processes ἐρωτῶμεν and παρακαλοῦμεν, with the Thessalonian recipients acting as their receivers. God also takes the role of sayer in the verbal process ἐκάλεσεν, with both the senders and the

Thessalonians as its receivers. In the mental process conveyed by οἴδατε, the

Thessalonian recipients assume the role of senser. The phenomenon they understand

involves the teachings imparted by the senders, likely during their presence among the

Thessalonians. Consistent with previous topic-comment units, the Thessalonian recipients

are again portrayed as fully knowledgeable, a status grammatically encapsulated in the

stative verb οἴδατε. This understanding of holiness and a sanctified life, particularly

characterized by abstaining from sexual immorality, is evident in their conduct, as

evidenced also by καθὼς καὶ περιπατεῖτε in 4:1. Here, while acknowledging their

commendable adherence to these teachings thus far, the senders exhort the Thessalonians

to surpass their current observance, urging them towards even greater commitment.

Interpersonal Meaning

In the current topic-comment unit, the senders assume authoritative role over the

believers. Their primary focus is on urging the Thessalonians to exceed their current

practices in living a sanctified life, with special emphasis on sexual morality. This role

extends to providing a detailed exposition of the moral requirements they are urging the

Thessalonians to follow. Contrasting with earlier topic-comment units, where the

emphasis was on reminding and informing about their preaching of the gospel and

pastoral activities in and post-Thessalonica, here the senders predominantly engage in

exhortation and guidance for the Thessalonian believers.

Conversely, the Thessalonian believers take on the role of recipients of the

senders' exhortation. In this context, they are depicted as knowledgeable about and

currently adhering well to the teachings on sexual morality. As the senders explicitly

articulate, the aim of this exhortation is to inspire the believers to further increase and surpass their current moral practice. Therefore, from the senders' perspective, while the Thessalonians are performing commendably in this moral aspect, they are also anticipated to exceed their existing conduct.

While the senders assume a hierarchically authoritative position, exhorting the Thessalonian recipients and urging them to meet moral requirements, they also portray themselves as being under a similar authority, jointly with the Thessalonians. In their exhortations, they explicitly declare that their actions are carried out in the Lord Jesus (ἐρωτῶμεν ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ in 4:1). Moreover, they affirm that the moral teachings they provided were through the Lord Jesus (παραγγελίας ἐδώκαμεν ὑμῖν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ in 4:2). Additionally, in explaining the rationale for adhering to these moral requirements, they invoke God as having called them along with the Thessalonians, utilizing the first person plural pronoun in the accusative case to signify themselves too as the objects of God's call to holiness (ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεός in 4:7).

In this topic-comment unit, the finite verbs in the primary clauses are consistently conveyed by indicative mood-forms, which grammaticalize an assertive attitude. This effectively portrays the processes in that mood-form as factual realities. The senders' actions in exhorting adherence to moral standards, especially abstaining from sexual immorality, along with the Thessalonians' awareness and their laudable practice of these teachings, God's call to holiness, and the note that to disregard these instructions equals disregarding God, are all assertively articulated through the indicative mood-forms as undeniable truths to be recognized and accepted.

Textual Meaning

This topic-comment unit is distinct from previous ones in several ways. First, it uniquely initiates with the adverbial use of λοιπόν, coupled with the transitional particle οὖν and the nominative form of address ἀδελφοί. This combination of transitioning devices may suggest a shift in the letter's main focus, diverging from the subjects previously addressed. Prior topic-comment units primarily centered on affirming the personal relationship between the senders and the Thessalonian recipients through various means: they highlighted the recipients' commendable reputation as perceived outside their community, reflected on the senders' evangelistic and pastoral efforts in Thessalonica, communicated the senders' continuous concern and care for the Thessalonians following their forced departure from Thessalonica, and included intercessory prayers to God on behalf of the believers.

Second, the inclusion of verbal groups ἐρωτῶμεν and παρακαλοῦμεν immediately following the transitional devices marks another distinct aspect. This arrangement signals a shift in the senders' main focus towards additional exhortation and encouragement specifically directed at the Thessalonians. Particularly, given the initial combination of λοιπόν and οὖν and the specific verbal groups ἐρωτῶμεν and παρακαλοῦμεν, it can be suggested that the subsequent exhortations are framed within the context of the strong relationship between the senders and the Thessalonian recipients, a relationship reaffirmed in the previous topic-comment units. This further signifies the senders' sustained pastoral ministry to the Thessalonians, which persists steadfastly despite the challenge of physical separation.

In this topic-comment unit, the verb οἴδατε is linguistically the most prominent element. With its marked perfect tense-form, it distinctively stands out as frontground material against the mainline of the letter, which is established by the imperfective aspect in the present tense-form. Alongside this stative aspect verb used as finite verb in the primary clause, the infinitive εἰδέναι and the participle εἰδότα are also in the stative aspect. These verbal elements are utilized in the detailed elucidation of the holiness required for the Thessalonians. Thus, the concept of knowing or being aware of holiness, particularly in relation to sexual morality, is linguistically emphasized in this topic-comment unit.

Considering the linguistic elements and structures discussed, the topic of this topic-comment unit can be identified as the senders' acts of exhortation to the Thessalonians regarding holiness. The comment is best understood as the senders' elucidation and rationale for this exhortation of holiness.

Paul's Exhortations on Brotherly Love to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 4:9–12)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1
[9] Περὶ δὲ τῆς φιλαδελφίας οὐ χρείαν **ἔχετε** <u>γράφειν</u> ὑμῖν,

αὐτοὶ γὰρ ὑμεῖς θεοδίδακτοί **ἐστε** εἰς τὸ <u>ἀγαπᾶν</u> ἀλλήλους·

[10] καὶ γὰρ **ποιεῖτε** αὐτὸ εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς τοὺς ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ.

παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, <u>περισσεύειν</u> μᾶλλον, [11] καὶ <u>φιλοτιμεῖσθαι</u> <u>ἡσυχάζειν</u> καὶ <u>πράσσειν</u> τὰ ἴδια καὶ <u>ἐργάζεσθαι</u> ταῖς χερσὶν ὑμῶν,
    καθὼς ὑμῖν <u>παρηγγείλαμεν</u>,
      [12] ἵνα <u>περιπατῆτε</u> εὐσχημόνως πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω καὶ μηδενὸς χρείαν <u>ἔχητε</u>.

This topic-comment unit comprises a single thematic unit, featuring just one thematized element: the second person plural pronoun ὑμεῖς, enhanced by the intensive pronoun αὐτοί. Occupying the prime slot in the clause complex, this thematized grammatical subject, referring to the Thessalonian recipients, stands out as a linguistically prominent feature. Central to this unit is the senders' further exhortation to the Thessalonians, which they develop by thematizing the recipients, depicted as those divinely instructed by God to love one another.

The thematic unit opens with a rhematic element introducing the subject matter through a prepositional phrase initiated by περί. Following this is another rheme that conveys the senders' evaluative statement about the recipient in relation to the subject matter. Subsequently, the thematic element is presented, followed by two additional rhematic process chains: the first aligns with the grammatical subject of the theme, while the second involves a process in which the senders are the subject.

Ideational Meaning

In this topic-comment unit, processes serving as predicates in the primary clauses are uniformly depicted in the imperfective aspect. One aspectually vague verb is present in this topic-comment unit (ἐστέ in 4:9). However, its co-textual environment, surrounded by the imperfective aspect verbs that characterize the current status of the Thessalonian recipients in relation to the exhortation, indicates that it contributes to both the mainline of this specific unit and to the overarching mainline of the letter.

In this topic-comment unit, of the four processes rendered in the imperfective aspect, three processes feature the Thessalonian believers as their primary participants

(ἔχετε, ἐστέ, and ποιεῖτε), while one process involves the senders (παρακαλοῦμεν).

Regarding brotherly love (περὶ δὲ τῆς φιλαδελφίας), the senders construe the

Thessalonians as those who require no further instruction (οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε γράφειν ὑμῖν),

as they themselves are divinely taught to love one another (αὐτοὶ γὰρ ὑμεῖς θεοδίδακτοί

ἐστε . . .), a practice already extended to all brothers and sisters throughout Macedonia

(γὰρ ποιεῖτε αὐτὸ . . . ἐν ὅλη τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ). In relation to this virtue, the senders

themselves encourage the Thessalonians to surpass their current efforts

(παρακαλοῦμεν . . . περισσεύειν μᾶλλον). Their advocacy includes working with their

hands, aspiring to a quiet life, conducting themselves appropriately towards outsiders,

and aiming for self-sufficiency.

In previous topic-comment units, the senders primarily highlighted the

Thessalonians' proficiency in aligning with their expectations and desires, using mental

processes to underscore their well-informed state (e.g., οἴδατε). However, in this unit, the

senders portray their adeptness in brotherly love through material (ἔχετε and ποιεῖτε) and

relational processes (ἐστέ). This approach reveals the Thessalonians' commendable

practice in this area, rooted in their divinely instructed status.

Interpersonal Meaning

Consistent with their approach thus far, the senders continue to adopt a highly positive

evaluative stance towards the Thessalonian believers. The Thessalonians' attributes in the

realm of brotherly love, as seen from the senders' perspective, are commendably

portrayed, especially as their love extends to all brothers and sisters throughout

Macedonia. By employing indicative mood-forms in the processes that predicate the

primary clause complexes, the Thessalonians' admirable current state and practical applications in brotherly love are assertively declared by the senders. Simultaneously, by employing the verbal group παρακαλοῦμεν, the senders position themselves as authoritative figures over the Thessalonian recipients. Echoing previous exhortations, the senders once again urge the Thessalonians to further excel in practicing brotherly love. Particularly, when urging the Thessalonians to further excel with additional exhortations, the senders clarify their objectives, one of which is proper conduct towards outsiders (πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω). In conjunction with the prepositional phrase ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ, this exhortation underscores the senders' expectation for the Thessalonians to extend their proper practice, rooted in love, beyond their church community.

<div align="center">Textual Meaning</div>

By employing the prepositional phrase περὶ τῆς φιλαδελφίας and integrating the adversative conjunction δέ within it, this topic-comment unit signals a transition from the previously discussed exhortation of holiness to the subject of brotherly love. The senders' statement in the final finite clause complex, expressing their urge to the Thessalonians, suggests that this subject is presented as another exhortation. This topic-comment unit's internal cohesion is further strengthened by the use of the inferential or explanatory conjunction γάρ, which links the first three finite clauses. Beginning the final clause complex with δέ, the senders convey their aspiration for the Thessalonians, already exemplary in brotherly love, to achieve even greater excellence.

In contrast to earlier topic-comment units, this one includes no finite verbs or other verbal elements in the stative aspect. The uniform use of the imperfective aspect for

finite verbs ensures consistent progression with foreground material. The thematized subject αὐτοὶ ὑμεῖς stands out as a particularly prominent linguistic element, notable for its thematic role and prime positioning, as well as the inclusion of an intensive pronoun. Further, linguistically significant elements manifest in the series of rank-shifted infinitive clause complexes, acting as complements to the finite verbal group παρακαλοῦμεν. Among these, predominantly in the active voice, the two infinitives φιλοτιμεῖσθαι and ἐργάζεσθαι are cast in the middle voice, recognized as the most marked voice-form; this particular use subtly underscores the exhortations to aspire to live quietly and to work with one's own hands.

Considering the discussions of pertinent linguistic elements and structures, it appears that the topic of this topic-comment unit is the senders' exhortation to the Thessalonians about brotherly love. The comment on this topic is characterized by the senders' evaluative statements about the Thessalonians' current practice of brotherly love, as well as additional exhortations to exceed their present level.

Paul's Exhortations on Those Who Sleep in Death to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 4:13–18)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1
[13] Οὐ **θέλομεν** δὲ ὑμᾶς <u>ἀγνοεῖν</u>, ἀδελφοί, περὶ τῶν <u>κοιμωμένων</u>,
    ἵνα μὴ <u>λυπῆσθε</u>
        καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ <u>ἔχοντες</u> ἐλπίδα.

   [14] εἰ γὰρ <u>πιστεύομεν</u>
       ὅτι Ἰησοῦς <u>ἀπέθανεν</u>
       καὶ <u>ἀνέστη</u>,
  οὕτως καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς <u>κοιμηθέντας</u> διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ **ἄξει** σὺν αὐτῷ.[34]

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[34] The syntactic structure of 1 Thess 4:14 could be considered elliptical since the introductory

¹⁵ τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν **λέγομεν** ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου,

ὅτι ἡμεῖς οἱ <u>ζῶντες</u> οἱ <u>περιλειπόμενοι</u> εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου οὐ μὴ <u>φθάσωμεν</u> τοὺς <u>κοιμηθέντας</u>·

¹⁶ ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ, <u>καταβήσεται</u> ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ,

καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ <u>ἀναστήσονται</u> πρῶτον,

¹⁷ ἔπειτα ἡμεῖς οἱ <u>ζῶντες</u> οἱ <u>περιλειπόμενοι</u> ἅμα σὺν αὐτοῖς <u>ἁρπαγησόμεθα</u> ἐν νεφέλαις εἰς ἀπάντησιν τοῦ κυρίου εἰς ἀέρα·

καὶ οὕτως πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ <u>ἐσόμεθα</u>.

¹⁸ ὥστε **παρακαλεῖτε** ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις.

Containing only one thematized element, this topic-comment unit is composed of a single thematic unit. The thematic element, expressed in the nominative case within the primary clause and functioning as the subject, is identified as ὁ θεός. The significance of this theme is expounded within the same clause by immediately subsequent process chain, portraying it as the entity that will accompany Jesus in bringing those who have fallen asleep in or with him. The theme's significance is further revealed by a conditional clause (protasis), which sets forth a scenario grounded in the belief in Jesus' death and resurrection, thereby shaping the direction of the main clause (apodosis). As the protasis is characterized as a first-class conditional clause with the indicative mood-form stating a

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wording "we believe that (πιστεύομεν ὅτι)" found in the protasis is not reiterated in the apodosis. Considering this elliptical structure, one might expect a logical connection as "If we believe that Jesus died and rose, so also (οὕτως) we believe that . . ." However, the current Greek text does not clearly follow such semantic and lexicogrammatical patterns; rather, it explicitly positions God (ὁ θεός) as the grammatical subject of the primary clause in the apodosis. Given this syntactic construction, this study identifies ὁ θεός as a thematized element due to its prominent placement as the fully grammatical subject in the nominative case within the primary clause, though the semantic connection between the protasis and apodosis could be seen as more logical if the implied elliptical "we believe" is considered. The surrounding lexicogrammatical elements, including the process chains of verbs that inherently suggest the first and second person plural as their grammatical subjects, serve as rhematic elements that elucidate and support the meaning of the thematized element ὁ θεός. In other words, the details conveyed by these rhematic elements center on and develop around ὁ θεός and his actions within this topic-comment unit. For further discussion of the elliptical nature of the syntactic structure of 1 Thess 4:14, refer to Fee, *Thessalonians*, 169; Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*, 318.

true hypothesis, the theme's meaning can be enhanced: if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, God will indeed bring with Him those who have passed away in Jesus.[35]

Besides the secondary clause, structured as a protasis, and the finite verbal construct within the same clause aligning with the grammatical subject of the theme, three additional process chains surround the thematized element. Each of these chains serves as a rheme, thereby enhancing the development of the theme. In this sense, the senders' intention to keep the Thessalonian recipients informed about those who sleep, their statement that those who are alive will not precede the ones who have fallen asleep until the Lord's coming, and their exhortation to comfort one another with these words, are all tied to the thematized concept of God and His anticipated future actions.

Considering the process chains and their integral lexicogrammatical elements, this topic-comment unit primarily focuses on the senders' semiotic actions of exhortation regarding the fate of the deceased and those who are still alive. Reflecting on the designations of the thematized and rhematic elements, the senders express their principal concern by thematizing God, which is further expounded through His anticipated future action for those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

Ideational Meaning

In this topic-comment unit, among the four finite verbs functioning as predicates in the primary clauses, three are depicted as imperfective, thereby portrayed as ongoing and carrying the mainline of the letter (θέλομεν in 4:13, λέγομεν in 4:15, and παρακαλεῖτε in

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[35] The primary apodosis clause begins with the inferential particle οὕτως, combined with an adverbially emphatic use of καί. Regarding such adverbial uses of καί, Porter proposes that its translation could be rendered as "indeed," "even," or "also." Porter, *Idioms*, 211.

4:18), while one is represented as a non-aspectual process, grammaticalized in the future form (ἄξει in 4:14).[36] The mental process conveyed by θέλομεν involves the senders as its primary participants and the Thessalonian recipients as secondary participants. The phenomenon is intended for the Thessalonian recipients, aimed at preventing their uninformed state regarding those who are asleep, so that they may not grieve like those who are devoid of hope.

In the verbal process λέγομεν, the senders assume the role of sayer elucidating the reasons why the Thessalonian recipients should not grieve over those who have died earlier than themselves. Within the verbiage grammaticalized in the subordinate ὅτι clauses, the senders affirm that those who remain alive will not precede those who have fallen asleep. This is because when the Lord descends from heaven, the dead in Christ will rise first, and then those who remain alive will be caught up to heaven. In particular, when the senders designate the contrasting figures to those who have fallen asleep, they express this distinction in a complex nominalized form. This form consists of the first person plural pronoun and two consecutive substantive participles (ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι). In grammatical terms, the first person plural ἡμεῖς functions as the grammatical head term and is appositionally connected to two substantive participles. These participles serve as modifiers attributing the characteristics of being alive and remaining to the grammatical head term ἡμεῖς. By using the first person plural ἡμεῖς, in which the senders are inclusive, the senders seem to affirm that not only the Thessalonian

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[36] The future form does not fully convey aspect and is morphologically related to attitude, which is expressed through mood-forms. According to this understanding, the future form is considered a non-aspectual verb, instead conveying the semantic feature of expectancy. Therefore, it is mainly discussed in relation to the text's interpersonal meaning. See Porter, *Idioms*, 44; Yoon, *Galatians*, 93.

recipients but also the senders themselves do not precede those who have fallen asleep until the Lord's parousia. That is to say, even the apostolic figures and church founders, such as Paul and his co-senders, must adhere to the precision of the Lord's eschatological scheme.

Thus, the argument that drawing upon the first person plural pronoun and the finite verb ἁρπαγησόμεθα, Paul expects the Lord's parousia will occur within his lifetime, and thus the eschatological account in 4:13–18 represents the imminent parousia, is not validated.[37] Although it is explicit that the first person plural pronoun refers to the grammatical person of ἁρπαγησόμεθα, it should also be noted that the pronoun is modified and specified by two substantive participles, οἱ ζῶντες and οἱ περιλειπόμενοι, rather than using just a single pronoun form ἡμεῖς. By accompanying these two substantive participles, the senders merely indicate the current states of the Thessalonian believers and themselves, which are in contrast to those who have fallen asleep. When they eventually fall asleep, they will also become part of the group of those who have fallen asleep and are expected to be raised first when the Lord descends from heaven. After this event, those who remain alive at that time will be caught up.

Following this, another verbal process unfolds, culminating in this topic-comment unit with the senders directing the Thessalonians to comfort one another with these words (παρακαλεῖτε). The Thessalonian recipients assume the role of sayer in this process,

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[37] Regarding this matter, Charles Wanamaker argues, "One important feature of Paul's eschatological understanding, at least at the time that he wrote 1 Thessalonians, becomes evident from v. 15b. He believed that he and many of his contemporaries would still be alive at the time of the Lord's coming, as the phrase ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου ("we who are living, who remain until the coming of the Lord") demonstrates" (*Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 171–72). See also Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 99; Friedrich, "l. Thessalonicher 5,1–11," 311–15.

which is directed by the senders for them to do so as a means of addressing the issue of the deceased believers among them. Thus, this topic-comment unit is about the senders' exhortation to the Thessalonians, urging them to find comfort in the words spoken here about the eschatological destiny of believers, both those who have fallen asleep and those who remain alive.

Interpersonal Meaning

In the previous two topic-comment units, the senders utilized finite verbs like ἐρωτῶμεν and παρακαλοῦμεν to articulate their acts of exhortation or encouragement towards the Thessalonians, positioning themselves as the primary agents in these processes. However, in the current unit, they choose παρακαλεῖτε, indicating that the Thessalonian recipients are now to undertake the role of exhorting or encouraging, with their fellow church members as the object of these actions. Previously, the Thessalonians were predominantly the recipients of encouragement and exhortation from the senders. In this segment, they are depicted as the ones who will extend encouragement or exhortation to each other. Given that παρακαλεῖτε is in the imperative mood-form, representing a directive from the senders, the Thessalonians are to follow this command under the senders' authoritative guidance. Considering the senders' discourse on the eschatological status of those who are deceased, the directed act of encouragement or exhortation towards the Thessalonians is intended to foster the sharing of hope in resurrection and the assurance of eternal life.

However, it is often argued that in this topic-comment unit, the senders portray the Thessalonians negatively, depicting them as individuals who have lost their

eschatological hope and fallen into despair, particularly due to the recent passing of fellow believers. This situation is seen as leading to a significant misunderstanding of the eschatology previously taught by the senders during their time with the Thessalonians.[38] However, it proves challenging to identify any decisive lexicogrammatical elements within this unit that could substantiate such a reconstruction of the situation, including the depiction of the Thessalonian believers as immature and emotionally vulnerable, marked by excessive grief and despair.

Rather than focusing on elements of despair or misunderstanding, this topic-comment unit sees the senders commanding the Thessalonian recipients to encourage or comfort each other concerning fellow believers who have passed away in the Lord. Their statements, expressed in two clause complexes with θέλομεν and λέγομεν as predicates, steer the discussion towards the Thessalonians engaging in acts of mutual encouragement or comfort, establishing a semantic foundation for this directive. The use of the resultative textual connector ὥστε before the predicate παρακαλεῖτε in the final clause reinforces the semantic direction set forth by the senders' statements.

Regarding the mood-forms and semantic attitudes, the two primary clauses' predicates, θέλομεν and λέγομεν, are in the indicative mood, signifying assertive semantic attitudes. Notably, the inclusion of the prepositional word group ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου with the predicate λέγομεν in the primary clause assertively indicates that the senders' discussion

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[38] Nicholl is representative of this view, as demonstrated in his following argument: "the situation underlying 1 Thessalonians was essentially one of distress, fear and insecurity in the wake of the unexpected deaths of fellow-community members; most strikingly, lacking a resurrection hope for their deceased, the community members seem to have despaired for them and for themselves, apparently interpreting the deaths as a sign that the Day of the Lord was about to come. The community's problems reflect an immature and Gentile Christian faith, not fully conversant with Jewish eschatological ideas" (*From Hope to Despair*, 184–85).

of eschatological events, involving both the deceased and the living members, is directly connected to the Lord's word.

Besides the indicative mood-forms, two non-indicative mood-forms are evident in the topic-comment unit: the future form ἄξει and the imperative mood-form παρακαλεῖτε. The latter, παρακαλεῖτε, is used by the senders to command the Thessalonian recipients to comfort or encourage one another, particularly in contexts involving deceased fellow believers. This represents a shift in the agent of the action, moving from the senders, as previously denoted by παρακαλοῦμεν, to fostering mutual support among the Thessalonians. In this context, the usage of the indicative mood-form λέγομεν, especially in conjunction with ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου, highlights the apostolic authority of the senders over the Thessalonian recipients. Conversely, employing the imperative mood-form παρακαλεῖτε, with its object ἀλλήλους, may reflect the senders' evaluative stance, suggesting the Thessalonians' ability to enact similar supportive actions towards their fellow believers. Essentially, this method indicates a potential elevation of the Thessalonians' role, prompting them to assume a supportive capacity akin to that previously exercised by the senders.

Textual Meaning

The current topic-comment unit is distinctively established as a semantic unit through numerous lexicogrammatical elements. It begins with the nominative of address ἀδελφοί and the prepositional word group περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων, thereby marking a transition from the previous unit to the new one. Furthermore, lexical items referring to those who have passed away, grammaticalized as κοιμωμένων, κοιμηθέντας, and οἱ νεκροὶ, are used

consistently. Also, terms denoting those who remain alive, consistently rendered as οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι, are employed to distinguish them from those who have fallen asleep.

In addition, this unit consistently employs inferential conjunctive devices to connect clause complexes. Within this unit, οὕτως and γάρ are used to link clauses, both between main clauses and between main and secondary clauses. Additionally, the inclusion of the resultative conjunction ὥστε in the final clause effectively culminates this unit, encapsulating the results of the prior discussion. In alignment with previous units that predominantly use the inferential or explanatory γάρ to connect clause movements, this unit also employs the same and similar inferential conjunctive devices, together with the resultative conjunction, to foster cohesive movement between clause complexes. The use of these inferential and resultative conjunctions imparts a cumulatively progressive development to the unit's semantic flow.

In terms of linguistic highlighting, the most striking lexicogrammatical elements are the marked mood-forms, namely the future form (ἄξει) and the imperative (παρακαλεῖτε). These mood-forms distinctly highlight the senders' expectations as the foreground material of this unit: the anticipated action of God to bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, and the expected role of the Thessalonian believers to comfort or encourage each other. Furthermore, the combination of the marked mood-form ἄξει with the unit's sole thematized element, ὁ θεός, along with the emphatic use of καί, positions ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἄξει σὺν αὐτῷ as the linguistically most prominent point of this unit.

Paul's Exhortations on the Day of the Lord to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 5:1–22)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1
^{5.1} Περὶ δὲ τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν, ἀδελφοί, οὐ χρείαν **ἔχετε** ὑμῖν γράφεσθαι,

² αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς **οἴδατε**
    ὅτι ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτης ἐν νυκτὶ οὕτως <u>ἔρχεται</u>.
     ³ ὅταν <u>λέγωσιν</u>· Εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια,
    τότε αἰφνίδιος αὐτοῖς <u>ἐφίσταται</u> ὄλεθρος
      ὥσπερ ἡ ὠδὶν τῇ ἐν γαστρὶ <u>ἐχούσῃ</u>,
    καὶ οὐ μὴ <u>ἐκφύγωσιν</u>.

Thematic Unit 2
⁴ ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ **ἐστὲ** ἐν σκότει,
    ἵνα ἡ ἡμέρα ὑμᾶς ὡς κλέπτης <u>καταλάβῃ</u>,

Thematic Unit 3
⁵ πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς υἱοὶ φωτός **ἐστε** καὶ υἱοὶ ἡμέρας.

οὐκ **ἐσμὲν** νυκτὸς οὐδὲ σκότους·

⁶ ἄρα οὖν μὴ **καθεύδωμεν** ὡς οἱ λοιποί,

ἀλλὰ **γρηγορῶμεν**

καὶ **νήφωμεν**.

Thematic Unit 4
⁷ οἱ γὰρ καθεύδοντες νυκτὸς **καθεύδουσιν**,

Thematic Unit 5
καὶ οἱ μεθυσκόμενοι νυκτὸς **μεθύουσιν**·

Thematic Unit 6
⁸ ἡμεῖς δὲ ἡμέρας <u>ὄντες</u> **νήφωμεν**, <u>ἐνδυσάμενοι</u> θώρακα πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ περικεφαλαίαν ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας·
    ⁹ ὅτι οὐκ <u>ἔθετο</u> ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ὀργὴν
    ἀλλὰ εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ¹⁰ τοῦ <u>ἀποθανόντος</u> περὶ ἡμῶν
      ἵνα εἴτε <u>γρηγορῶμεν</u>
      εἴτε <u>καθεύδωμεν</u>
      ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ <u>ζήσωμεν</u>.

^{11} διὸ **παρακαλεῖτε** ἀλλήλους

καὶ **οἰκοδομεῖτε** εἷς τὸν ἕνα,
    καθὼς καὶ ποιεῖτε.

^{12} **Ἐρωτῶμεν** δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, <u>εἰδέναι</u> τοὺς <u>κοπιῶντας</u> ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ <u>προϊσταμένους</u> ὑμῶν ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ <u>νουθετοῦντας</u> ὑμᾶς, ^{13} καὶ <u>ἡγεῖσθαι</u> αὐτοὺς ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ διὰ τὸ ἔργον αὐτῶν.

εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς.

^{14} **παρακαλοῦμεν** δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί,

νουθετεῖτε τοὺς ἀτάκτους,

παραμυθεῖσθε τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους,

ἀντέχεσθε τῶν ἀσθενῶν,

μακροθυμεῖτε πρὸς πάντας.

^{15} **ὁρᾶτε**
    μή τις κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ τινι <u>ἀποδῷ</u>,
    ἀλλὰ πάντοτε τὸ ἀγαθὸν <u>διώκετε</u> εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας.

Thematic Unit 7
^{16} πάντοτε **χαίρετε**,

^{17} ἀδιαλείπτως **προσεύχεσθε**,

^{18} ἐν παντὶ **εὐχαριστεῖτε**·

τοῦτο γὰρ θέλημα θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς.

^{19} τὸ πνεῦμα μὴ **σβέννυτε**,

^{20} προφητείας μὴ **ἐξουθενεῖτε**·

^{21} πάντα δὲ **δοκιμάζετε**,

τὸ καλὸν **κατέχετε**,

²² ἀπὸ παντὸς εἴδους πονηροῦ **ἀπέχεσθε.**

Based on the analysis of thematization, the textual structure of 1 Thess 5:1–22 is characterized by seven distinct thematic units. The sequence of these thematized elements is as follows: αὐτοί in 5:2, serving as an intensive pronoun for οἴδατε, ὑμεῖς in 5:4, πάντες . . . ὑμεῖς in 5:5, οἱ . . . καθεύδοντες in 5:7, οἱ μεθυσκόμενοι also in 5:7, ἡμεῖς in 5:8, and finally τοῦτο in 5:18, which refers to the substantive word group θέλημα θεοῦ.

Given the initial prepositional word group περὶ δὲ τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν in 5:1, it is evident that this topic-comment unit focuses on the times and the seasons concerning the day of the Lord. The senders present the identified thematic elements to effectively discuss this subject matter and delineate the textual structure as a coherent semantic unit. Especially, the progression of the discussion on the times and the seasons related to the day of the Lord is marked by the senders thematizing primarily the current knowledge and existential status of the primary participants of the letter, namely the Thessalonian recipients and the senders themselves. This thematic focus is evidenced by process chains grammatically indicating to these groups, particularly through verbs like οἴδατε and variations of εἰμί (ἐστέ and ἐσμέν). Furthermore, the senders incorporate secondary participants, who represent contrasting figures to those who remain awake and sober, and introduce an abstract concept referred to as the will of God as additional thematic elements.

Two noteworthy features are found in thematic units 6 and 7, where the senders present a long list of commands to the Thessalonian recipients. On a cursory look, these extensive commandments, primarily in imperative mood-forms, do not seem to align with the subject matter of the times and the seasons in relation to the day of the Lord. Thus,

most commentaries and scholarly works tend to separate 5:12–22 from the discussion of

the day of the Lord, treating it as a distinct semantic unit(s) comprised of a list of

commandments that autonomously stand apart.[39] However, the current textual structure,

as delineated by the thematization scheme, suggests that the series of commandments in

5:12–22 is part of the discussion of the day of the Lord. Significantly, after introducing

the explicit thematic element ἡμεῖς at 5:8, no other thematic elements are introduced

during the presentation of the commandments, with the exception of τοῦτο at 5:18. The

appearance of τοῦτο marks a transition to a different series of commandments in the range

of 5:16–22, which are also integrated into the larger semantic framework discussing the

day of the Lord. This implies that the commandments listed in 5:12–15 are anchored to

the thematized element ἡμεῖς at 5:8, serving as rhematic process chains. These chains, in

turn, elaborate and expand the meaning of ἡμεῖς, who should remain sober, having put on

the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation, in anticipation of

the day of the Lord. To be more specific, the commandments in 5:12–15 aim to elucidate

concrete and practical ways of being sober, as previously mentioned in 5:8 with the

thematic element ἡμεῖς. Furthermore, the commands παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους καὶ

οἰκοδομεῖτε εἰς τὸν ἕνα in 5:11, marked by the use of the conjunction διό, serve to

encapsulate the discussion of the day of the Lord.[40] The commandments that immediately

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[39] In Gupta's visual presentation, outlining 1 Thessalonians as proposed by scholars Jewett, Wanamaker, Malherbe, Fee, Weima, and Gupta himself, the majority treat 1 Thess 5:12–22 as separate from the discourse on the day of the Lord. For them, this passage commonly falls under general exhortations for intra-communal or congregational life, serving as supplementary or ancillary material that follows the main discussions and leads to the conclusion of the letter. Gupta, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 41–46.

[40] Porter points out that the particle διό is commonly understood as a subordinator, a term used in grammar to introduce subordinate clauses that depend on main clauses. However, he notes that this conventional classification may not accurately reflect how διό is actually used in the New Testament. This suggests a potential discrepancy between the traditional grammatical role of διό and its specific application in the context of New Testament Greek. Porter, *Idioms*, 209.

follow can thus be interpreted as semantic expansions and elaborations of these

παρακαλεῖτε and οἰκοδομεῖτε commands, focusing on mutual encouragement and the

building of church membership.

The rationale for demarcating the series of commands beginning at 5:16 and

extending to 5:22 as a distinct thematic unit lies in the nature of the objects of the

commandments, which differ from those in 5:12–15. While the commands in 5:12–15

specifically address church members as the objects, outlining appropriate actions for

each, the commands in 5:16–22 do not single out individual church members as their

objects. Instead, these commands focus on the actions themselves, specifying their

manners, or, when objects are mentioned, they are characterized as either divine or

spiritual-related entities or abstract concepts. Thus, the thematic element τοῦτο at 5:18,

referencing the will of God, acts as an anchoring point for these commandments. These

commandments, in turn, function as rhematic process chains, elucidating the meaning of

the will of God within the larger semantic framework where the day of the Lord is the

primary subject of concern. Therefore, the directives demarcated in thematic units 7, as

well as in thematic unit 6, are not merely general guidelines; they represent specific

actions that are essential for the Thessalonians in their preparation for the day of the

Lord, serving as concrete and practical ways to remain sober and vigilant until the day of

the Lord comes.

Ideational Meaning

In this topic-comment unit, processes represented by finite verbs functioning as

predicates in primary clauses are predominantly rendered in an imperfective aspect,

expressed through the present tense-form. This consistent portrayal of processes as ongoing and in progress indicates that the majority of actions or states involving the participants and entities are presented as foreground material. Additionally, in light of the discourse type of the Thessalonian letter, which mainly utilizes processes in the imperfect aspect to shape its mainline, this topic-comment unit incorporates a substantial number of processes that notably enhance the mainline of the letter as a whole. Regarding the aspectually vague verbs appearing in 5:1–5 (ἐστέ and ἐσμέν), their co-textual environment, surrounded by imperfective aspect verbs selected to depict processes involved in discussing the times and seasons in relation to the day of the Lord, suggests that the εἰμί verbs here may be considered as forming the mainline of this unit.

In this topic-comment unit, the singular instance of a non-imperfective aspect appears in the stative aspect of οἴδατε. The secondary clause linked to the οἴδατε predicate provides further detail on the Thessalonians' understanding. This understanding encompasses the notion that the day of the Lord will arrive unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. Non-believers proclaim, "peace and security (εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια)," but they will unexpectedly face sudden destruction, as abrupt as labor pains for a pregnant woman, from which there is no possibility of escape. The employment of the most marked stative aspect verb form οἴδατε in the senders' statement effectively places the Thessalonians' awareness of the non-believers' current mindset and their eventual destiny regarding the day of the Lord at the forefront, making it the most prominent point in the discussion of the day of the Lord.

Crucially, this salient point, emphasizing the Thessalonians' understanding of the non-believers' perspectives and ultimate outcomes, is further accentuated by the senders'

ensuing comments. These remarks sharply contrast the current state and eventual

destinies of the Thessalonian believers with those of the non-believers. The authors

articulate that in the context of the day of the Lord, the Thessalonian believers, in unison

with the senders, identified as sons of light and day, not of night or darkness, are called to

maintain sobriety and vigilance. This is predicated on the understanding that God has not

predestined them for wrath, but for achieving salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. In

the framework of experiential spheres regarding the day of the Lord, non-believers are

portrayed as being oblivious to the Lord's coming, believing themselves to be in states of

peace and security guaranteed by the secular world. In contrast, Thessalonian believers

are depicted as spiritually awake and sober in preparation for the coming day of the Lord.

In this regard, when addressing the day of the Lord as the main subject matter, the

senders focus more on imparting a proper understanding of the states and behaviors

necessary for anticipating and preparing for its arrival. To effectively communicate this,

they introduce supporting material that is brought to the forefront, mentioning the

mindset and fate of non-believers, which starkly contrasts with those of the Thessalonian

believers.

In numerous scholarly discussions, lexicogrammatical elements such as κλέπτης

ἐν νυκτὶ (thief in the night), αἰφνίδιος ὄλεθρος (sudden destruction), ἡ ὠδὶν τῇ ἐν γαστρὶ

ἐχούσῃ (labor pains upon a pregnant woman), and ἡ ἡμέρα ὑμᾶς ὡς κλέπτης καταλάβῃ

(the day overtaking you like a thief) are frequently referenced as indicative of the

imminent and impending parousia of the day of the Lord.[41] However, the interplay of the

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[41] See Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 19; McKinnish Bridges, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 196; Mearns, "Early Eschatological Development," 153.

Thessalonians' knowledge, highlighted by the distinctly marked stative verb οἴδατε in 5:2, together with the subsequent remarks of the senders about the Thessalonians' current existential states (expressed through εἰμί verbs in 5:4–5), challenges the conventional interpretation of these lexicogrammatical elements as signaling an imminent parousia. Instead, these terms are employed to construe the unique attributes of the Thessalonian believers. For them, the day of the Lord is not an unforeseen event bringing destruction as it is for unbelievers; rather, it represents a moment for securing salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ (εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 5:9), emphasizing the need for alertness and sobriety in their readiness and anticipation for that day (γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν).

Within the ideational landscape of this topic-comment unit, the list of commands given by the senders to the Thessalonians, spanning 5:11 to 22, serves as guidelines for maintaining vigilance and sobriety. Commencing with the inferential conjunction διό, the discourse, which has been centered on the day of the Lord and particularly on the knowledge and states of being of the Thessalonian recipients, shifts to provide practical and concrete ways to stay alert and sober in readiness for the day of the Lord. This shift is predominantly characterized by the directives provided by the authors. The primary recipients of these directives are the Thessalonians, while the secondary participants encompass various church members, each distinguished by unique attributes and corresponding actions to be undertaken towards them. Furthermore, spiritual or divine entities are also mentioned as the objects of these instructions, with whom all Thessalonian recipients are expected to engage or behave in a manner consistent with these directives.

Reflecting on the lexicogrammatical patterns and semantic progressions in this topic-comment unit, the discussion of the day of the Lord goes beyond common scholarly debates about its imminent arrival. This discourse is not merely instructional content for refining or adjusting the Thessalonians' understanding of the day of the Lord. Instead, the discussion is directed with a parenetic or exhortative intent by the senders, focusing on the spiritual growth and edification of the church members in Thessalonica. The extensive series of directives, presented from 5:11 to 22, is proposed by the senders as precise and actionable steps. These directives are grounded in a lifestyle of vigilance and sobriety, akin to being sons of light and day, actively awaiting the Lord's arrival. This approach starkly contrasts with those who are unaware of the approaching day, depicted as those asleep, associated with night and darkness.

Interpersonal Meaning

Consistent with the preceding topic-comment units, this unit reveals the senders' highly positive evaluative stance towards their Thessalonian recipients. First, in the epistemological dimension, the Thessalonians are construed as thoroughly aware or accurately knowledgeable about the significance of the day of the Lord. This is particularly noted in how it affects unbelievers who lack this understanding. Second, in the existential dimension, the senders, including themselves with the Thessalonians in this category using the first person plural pronoun, characterize the recipients as sons of light and day, a distinction from night and darkness—the realms to which the unbelievers are said to belong. The senders' evaluative stance regarding the epistemological dimension is evident in their grammatical use of the stative aspect οἴδατε in 5:2,

indicating the recipients' knowledgeable state.[42] Moreover, their perspective on the

existential dimension is conveyed through the consistent use of εἰμί verbs in 5:4–5. All

these related verbs are grammaticalized in the indicative mood-forms, affirming the

senders' remarks about the Thessalonians' knowing and being states, especially regarding

the day of the Lord, as declared assertively. The senders construe these as factual realities

that the Thessalonian recipients are to admit as fact.

However, the senders do not simply regard the Thessalonians as commendable

figures who require no further growth or increase. In alignment with the preceding topic-

comment units, the senders provide additional exhortative directives for the

Thessalonians' further development, especially in relation to the day of the Lord. First,

after acknowledging the Thessalonians' current knowledge and existential condition

regarding this matter, marked by the emphatic inferential conjunction ἄρα οὖν at 5:6, the

senders invite the recipients to not sleep like those ignorant of the day of the Lord, but to

remain vigilant and sober.[43] This admonition is expressed through the use of plural

hortative subjunctives. Beyond this exhortation, expressed through hortatory

subjunctives, the senders further encourage the Thessalonians to engage in actions

reflective of their redemptive status, as assured by the Lord Jesus Christ. These actions,

stemming from a state not of wrath but of salvation, are to be enacted in the real and

concrete situations experienced by the Thessalonian recipients. This guidance begins with

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[42] The authors acknowledge the thorough understanding of the Thessalonians, as evidenced by the use of the stative verb οἴδατε in combination with ἀκριβῶς, employed adverbially.

[43] Referencing Margaret Thrall's work, Porter observes that the conjunction of ἄρα and οὖν likely serves to create a strongly inferential connection. Porter, *Idioms*, 207. See Thrall, *Greek Particles*, 10.

the inferential conjunction διό, which introduces a series of directives to the Thessalonians, primarily using the imperative mood-form.

However, the formulation of commands in the hortatory subjunctives and in the imperative mood-forms does not necessarily imply that the Thessalonians are deficient in the actions these mood-forms involve. Rather, the choice of hortatory subjunctives in the first person plural, as opposed to the more direct imperative mood-form, may suggest an expectation for the Thessalonians to continue the actions denoted by these forms, paralleling the senders' actions. Furthermore, as discussed in the preceding topic-comment unit, the directive represented by παρακαλεῖτε at 5:11 might indicate that the senders are inviting the Thessalonian recipients to assume the role of encouraging, comforting, or exhorting their fellow church members. This mirrors the senders' previous actions towards the Thessalonians, as exemplified by παρακαλοῦμεν ὑμᾶς in 4:10. This becomes evident when observing that the actions the senders require of the Thessalonians involve specific participants as the objects of these actions. For instance, among the actions required of the Thessalonians, they are called to admonish the idle (νουθετεῖτε τοὺς ἀτάκτους), encourage the fainthearted (παραμυθεῖσθε τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους), help the weak (ἀντέχεσθε τῶν ἀσθενῶν), and be patient with everyone (μακροθυμεῖτε πρὸς πάντας). From the senders' perspective, the Thessalonians are not merely recipients of pastoral care from the senders. Instead, they are portrayed as expected to extend similar pastoral care and support toward their fellow church members, thereby building the church community (οἰκοδομεῖτε εἷς τὸν ἕνα).

Textual Meaning

The semantic unity and coherence of this topic-comment unit are established through various lexicogrammatical elements. This unit is differentiated from the previous one by the occurrence of the περί prepositional word group, coupled with the connective δέ at the beginning, which signifies a shift in the subject matter (περὶ δὲ τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν). This shift is further emphasized by the nominative of address, ἀδελφοί. The overall progression of the discourse is characterized by two key inferential conjunctions: ἄρα οὖν at 5:6 and διό at 5:11. The former supports the discussion of the Thessalonians' knowledgeable and existential states regarding the day of the Lord, introducing commands conveyed in hortatory mood-form verbs, based on these states. The latter conjunction, διό, enhances the discussion, encompassing both the Thessalonians' states of knowledge and existence and the senders' hortatory commands. It introduces a series of commandments predominantly characterized by imperative mood-form verbs. These commands, actions required by the senders, are meant for the Thessalonians to undertake in their real, concrete situations, reflecting on the significances related to the day of the Lord.

The lexicogrammatical elements that are marked in this topic-comment unit are primarily evident in the mood-forms of verbs. This section, in contrast to preceding units, contains a considerable number of verbs in subjunctive and imperative mood-forms. The employment of these marked mood-forms effectively foregrounds the senders' projection of their expectations and desires regarding the actions Thessalonian believers should adopt in anticipation of, and preparation for, the day of the Lord. The interplay of these non-indicative mood-form verbs with indicative mood-form verbs reveals the semantic

landscape of this unit in terms of attitude. The unit begins with assertive statements in indicative mood-form verbs, delineating the Thessalonians' current state in relation to this subject. This sets the stage for the senders' hortatory commands and directives, expressed in the first person plural subjunctive and the imperative mood-forms, respectively. Such organizational features of the semantic attitudes suggest that the commandments in imperative mood-form verbs are integral to the discussion of the day of the Lord. Hence, the day of the Lord is portrayed not just as a doctrinal topic, but as the foundation for the Thessalonians' practical actions, which include building up fellow church members and spiritual growth.

Regarding the frontground material in this topic-comment unit, the senders' statement at 5:2 distinctly emerges as the most linguistically salient point. This prominence is demonstrated by the occurrence of the thematized element αὐτοί, strategically positioned in the prime slot and employed as an intensive pronoun to emphatically signify its grammatical subject, along with the use of the stative verbal aspect οἴδατε. The concentrated presence of these marked lexicogrammatical elements at this specific juncture renders this clause complex the most outstanding, thereby establishing it as semantically the most prominent. Just as in the preceding topic-comment units that bring to the fore the Thessalonians' knowledgeable state regarding the subject matter discussed within their respective topic-comment units as the most prominent, this unit follows this exact pattern.

Paul's Intercessory Prayer for the Thessalonians (1 Thess 5:23–24)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1
²³ Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης **ἁγιάσαι** ὑμᾶς ὁλοτελεῖς,

Thematic Unit 2
καὶ ὁλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀμέμπτως ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ **τηρηθείη**.

Thematic Unit 3
²⁴ πιστὸς ὁ <u>καλῶν</u> ὑμᾶς,
    ὃς καὶ <u>ποιήσει</u>.

In the current topic-comment unit, three lexicogrammatical elements stand out thematically, identifiable by the grammatical subjects articulated in the nominative case within the primary clauses. These thematic elements are αὐτὸς . . . ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης in 5:23, ὁλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα in 5:23, and ὁ καλῶν ὑμᾶς in 5:24, form the basis around which three discernible thematic units emerge. The first two elements are more salient due to their placement in the prime slot of their respective clauses, compared to the third, which is positioned in a subsequent slot. Instead, the grammatical complement πιστός, attributing the characteristics of the theme, is positioned in the prime slot. Notably, the first thematic element gains additional prominence from the intensive pronoun αὐτός, marking it as the most significant theme within this topic-comment unit.

The rhematic elements that enhance the thematized elements through process chains are evident in two instances: the first is ἁγιάσαι, corresponding to αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης, and the second is τηρηθείη, related to ὁλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα. However, the thematic element ὁ καλῶν ὑμᾶς is not developed through process

chains due to its presence in a verbless clause, but rather through the predicative adjective

πιστός. Reflecting on the process chains presented, this topic-comment unit primarily

focuses on the senders' aspirational actions. These actions project outcomes contingent

on the will of the divine figure, with the Thessalonian recipients positioned as the

beneficiaries of the conditional expectations of fulfillment. The senders' actions, as

depicted in this topic-comment unit, resemble intercessory prayers directed towards the

divine figure for the benefit of the Thessalonian recipients. In undertaking this semiotic

action, the senders specifically thematize the divine figure, presenting Him as the God of

peace and as the caller of the Thessalonian recipients. Additionally, they thematize the

recipients by representing them in their entirety, encompassing their spirit, soul, and

body.

<div align="center">Ideational Meaning</div>

Both finite verbs acting as predicates in the primary clauses, ἀγιάσαι and τηρηθείη, occur

in the perfective aspect. Given that the predominant portrayal of processes lies in this

aspect, the mainline of the topic-comment unit is effectively advanced by verbs

demonstrating the perfective aspect. However, within the overall progressive movement

of the entire letter, this topic-comment unit does not contribute to the mainline but rather

plays a supportive background role.

Similar to the previous topic-comment unit characterized by the senders'

intercessory prayer in 3:9–13, this unit also progresses through the use of perfective

aspect verbs. This consistency in using perfective aspects suggests that both intercessory

prayer units primarily serve as supportive background material in the progression of the

entire letter. Notably, these units are strategically placed between major sections of the letter, highlighting their transitional role. Specifically, the intercessory prayer unit in 3:9–13 transitions from the senders' semiotic actions, which affirm and strengthen their relationship with the Thessalonian recipients through expressions of gratitude and updates on their ongoing missionary and pastoral endeavors, to another set of semiotic actions. These subsequent actions focus on exhortation and encouragement, addressing various areas where further growth and improvement are anticipated for the recipients. Similarly, the current intercessory prayer unit serves a transitional role, moving from a group of exhortation topic-comment units to the final unit of the letter. This final unit is distinguished by the senders' concluding greetings and additional requests. Importantly, the groups of topic-comment units surrounding the two intercessory prayer units predominantly utilize imperfective aspect verbs, which contribute significantly to the mainline of the letter.[44]

Regarding the types of processes and their associated participants, the verb ἀγιάσαι represents a material process, with the God of peace as the actor and the Thessalonian recipients as the goal. In the broader semiotic context of this topic-comment unit, the verb τηρηθείη also signifies a material process. Its passive voice-form shifts the

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[44] As previously discussed, in the topic-comment unit titled Paul's Account of His Ongoing Pastoral Ministry in His Absence from the Thessalonians (2:14—3:8), perfective aspect verbs are predominantly used, without explicit imperfective aspect verbs. However, the rhetorical question-and-answer format, almost parenthetical in nature, contrasts with the background material conveyed by the perfective aspect verbs. Furthermore, the verb ἐστέ distinguishes itself as foreground material within its co-textual environment, marked by the rhetorical format and its distinct conveyance of information. Additionally, within the broader semantic framework of the entire letter, this unit aligns with the functions served by the preceding two topic-comment units in linguistically construing a specific context of situation. It details the senders' ongoing pastoral care for the Thessalonians following their forced departure from Thessalonica, thereby constructing a semiotic context of situation that strengthens the relationship between the senders and recipients, in a manner similar to the preceding two topic-comment units.

focus to the Thessalonians' whole spirit, soul, and body, which are grammaticalized as the subject, emphasizing what is acted upon rather than the agent performing the action. Nevertheless, based on the surrounding co-textual environment, it can be inferred that the divine figure is the implied agent who keeps the Thessalonians blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the preceding topic-comment unit, the senders exhorted the Thessalonians with various commands, anticipating their ability to live in preparation for the day of the Lord. However, in this unit, the senders clarify that the ultimate agent responsible for sanctifying and keeping the Thessalonian believers blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is God Himself. Furthermore, from the senders' perspective, the Thessalonians' perfection in holistic being at the coming of the Lord is assured. They believe that the God who called the Thessalonians, being faithful, will indeed ensure this fulfillment (πιστὸς ὁ καλῶν ὑμᾶς, ὃς καὶ ποιήσει).

<center>Interpersonal Meaning</center>

In this topic-comment unit, the linguistic portrayal of participant relationships casts God as the benefactor to the Thessalonian believers. The senders are depicted as advocates, expressing their wish for God's favorable actions towards the Thessalonians. The Thessalonians themselves are solely presented as beneficiaries, recipients of God's provision and the subjects of the senders' appeals for divine favor.

In a unit similar to the previous intercessory prayer unit, the senders again assume an intermediary role between God and the Thessalonian recipients in this unit. God, positioned at the highest hierarchical level, is depicted as fulfilling the senders' wishes for the Thessalonians, but always in accordance with His own will. The senders merely project their hope that God will grant the Thessalonians perfection in holistic being, a

sentiment reflected in the use of the optative mood-form, which emphasizes that the realization of these wishes is entirely subject to God's divine will. Except for this and the previous intercessory prayer topic-comment unit, the senders in all other units typically express their expectations of their communicative partners using command-like expressions, mainly using imperative or first person plural hortatory subjunctive moods. However, in the two intercessory prayer units, when expressing hopes for divine action, they consistently employ wishful remarks in the optative mood. This specific mood-form, signifying realities contingent upon the divine will, highlights the sovereignty and authority of the divine figures in actualizing the senders' hopes and expectations.

In the overall Thessalonian discourse, which progresses mainly through processes depicted in imperfective aspect verbs, both the current topic-comment unit and the preceding intercessory prayer unit function as background material, not contributing directly to the mainline of the letter. However, their role as background material is not insignificant. These units, presenting the divine figures—identified by their highest hierarchical status among the participants and whose actions are portrayed as contingent on their will—lay the groundwork for all the foreground material. This material, which forms the mainline of the letter, is thus established and propelled forward on this foundation.

Textual Meaning

The most notable lexicogrammatical features differentiating this topic-comment unit from the previous one are observed in the more frequent thematization of the divine figure and the consistent use of verbs in the optative mood-form. Additionally, while the previous topic-comment unit predominantly advances through processes depicted with

verbs in the imperfective aspect—thus forming the mainline of the letter—this unit exclusively employs verbs in the perfective aspect.

The internal unity of this topic-comment unit is achieved through the use of the connective conjunction καί, linking the first and second clause complexes. The third clause complex, though lacking explicit conjunctive devices, is semantically connected to the preceding complexes through asyndeton, as it also thematizes the divine figure ὁ καλῶν, anaphorically referring to the same entity, αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης. This unit diverges from others in not employing inferential or explanatory conjunctions like γὰρ, ἄρα οὖν, or τοιγαροῦν for internal textual unity. Similar to the preceding intercessory prayer topic-comment unit, the connections between the senders' hopeful remarks and God's anticipated actions are not forged with such conjunctive devices. Instead of elaborating with supporting or expanding elements, these intercessory prayer topic-comment units succinctly express the senders' desires or expectations from God.

The marked lexicogrammatical features in this topic-comment unit are manifested in its three thematized elements. Among these, the thematic element αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης is especially notable, occupying the prime slot and being augmented by the intensive pronoun αὐτός, which enhances the grammatical subject. Furthermore, the two optative mood-form verbs are considered marked lexicogrammatical elements, underscoring the semantic prominence of the actions these mood-form verbs convey.

Paul's Final Requests and Greetings to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 5:25–28)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1
²⁵ Ἀδελφοί, **προσεύχεσθε** περὶ ἡμῶν.

²⁶ **ἀσπάσασθε** τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς πάντας ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ.

²⁷ **ἐνορκίζω** ὑμᾶς τὸν κύριον ἀναγνωσθῆναι τὴν ἐπιστολὴν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς.

²⁸ ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ᾽ ὑμῶν.

The final topic-comment unit contains a single thematic element, thus forming a solitary thematic unit. The grammatical subject in the nominative case within the primary clause is identified as ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. However, the clause containing the thematic element is verbless, resulting in the absence of a process chain aligned with the grammatical subject of the theme within its clause structure. Instead, the process chains enacted by the Thessalonian recipients and the primary author, Paul, serve as rhematic elements. They enhance and elaborate on the theme, focusing on the act of greeting. Similar to the first topic-comment unit, this one also distinguishes itself by thematizing the act of greeting. While the former introduces a theme marked by the act of greeting at the letter's outset, immediately after introducing the authorial figures, the latter showcases a theme characterized by a concluding act of greeting at the letter's end. This arrangement signifies that the rhematic elements are presented first, followed by the thematic element at the end.

Considering the arrangement of thematic and rhematic elements, the senders extend beyond a mere valediction in concluding the letter. Their final greeting includes a directive for the Thessalonian recipients to pray for them (προσεύχεσθε in 5:25). Intriguingly, in thematic unit 2 of the first topic-comment unit, where the senders convey

gratitude as an extension of the interpersonal relationship initiated by the χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη greeting, one manifestation of this gratitude is praying for the Thessalonian recipients (εὐχαριστοῦμεν . . . μνείαν ποιούμενοι ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν ἡμῶν). In the current topic-comment unit, the act of final greeting similarly involves prayer. However, the roles are reversed: the senders now invite the Thessalonians to pray for them. Additionally, the senders command the Thessalonians to greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss, reflecting the senders' own greeting actions, but directed towards fellow church members (ἀσπάσασθε in 5:26). Furthermore, Paul personally enacts an adjuration for the Thessalonians to read this letter to all the brethren (ἐνορκίζω in 5:27). By adjuring them to share the letter with all church members, Paul effectively involves the Thessalonians in his ministerial work. The public reading of the apostle's letter acts as a supplement to his responsibilities in guiding the church, particularly during his absence from Thessalonica.

The final greeting, therefore, is not merely a formality but a comprehensive gesture that encapsulates the core interactional dynamics between the senders and the Thessalonian recipients. This gesture is reinforced by the reciprocal nature of the relationship, highlighting mutual care, community bonding, and shared responsibilities in faith. This holistic approach in the final greeting serves to strengthen the unity and collective purpose of the church community.

Ideational Meaning

In the rhematic process chains complementing the thematized final greeting, the finite verbs προσεύχεσθε and ἐνορκίζω are depicted in the imperfective aspect to indicate ongoing and progressive processes, while ἀσπάσασθε is in the perfective aspect, denoting

a complete and whole process. This variation in verbal aspects suggests that, by treating the act of greeting as a background task for the Thessalonian recipients, the senders bring their requests for prayer and the public reading of the letter to the forefront of their communication.

Once all three processes are categorized as verbal processes, with the Thessalonian recipients as primary participants assuming the role of the sayer, the senders depict the Thessalonians as engaging in verbal actions that aid both the senders and their fellow believers. These actions encompass praying for the senders, fostering church membership through kind greetings, and reading the apostle's letter. Additionally, with the verbal process $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\alpha\lambda\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\tau\epsilon$, issued by the senders as a command for mutual action among the Thessalonians in previous exhortation topic-comment units, the Thessalonians are encouraged to undertake these acts represented by the verbal processes, thereby benefitting both the senders and their fellow church members.

Interpersonal Meaning

As previously discussed, the senders command the Thessalonian recipients, using imperative mood-form verbs, to pray for them and greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss. This directive approach implies that the senders believe in the Thessalonians' capability to perform these actions. They anticipate that the Thessalonians will reciprocate the support through prayer, just as the senders do for them, and maintain harmonious relationships within their community through kind greetings, mirroring the senders' actions. Here, the senders also exhibit a highly positive evaluative stance towards the Thessalonians, acknowledging and reinforcing the strong personal relationship between the Thessalonian believers and themselves.

In examining the mood-form used, it is noteworthy that ἐνορκίζω is presented in the indicative mood, contrasting with the imperative mood-form verbs previously discussed. This indicative mood-form, while seemingly less forceful, carries a strong request due to its lexical meaning, commonly translated as "to put under oath" or "to adjure." This intensity is further enhanced by the adverbial group τὸν κύριον, indicating an appeal to the Lord. The grammatical subject of ἐνορκίζω being first person singular, and in light of previous uses of first person singular pronouns associated with Paul's name (ἐγὼ . . . Παῦλος in 2:18 and κἀγώ in 3:5), suggests that Paul himself is making the request. Thus, Paul's personal request, combined with these specific lexicogrammatical elements, lends significant weight to the action of publicly reading the letter. Consequently, the act of reading the letter, conveyed assertively in the indicative mood, should be regarded by the Thessalonians as an imperative reality requiring their action.[45]

<div align="center">Textual Meaning</div>

The key lexicogrammatical element that differentiates this topic-comment unit from the previous ones is the thematized element ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. This thematic element serves to signal the end of the letter, providing a distinct interpersonal gesture. It signifies the senders' conclusion of their communication through this medium, employing a phrase that is culturally resonant and commonly used within the early Christian community. Furthermore, the use of the discourse marker ἀδελφοί in the

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[45] Fee and Weima, interpreting the implied grammatical subject of ἐνορκίζω, assert that this functions to authenticate the letter as authored by Paul. Considering that the letter was dictated by Paul and recorded by an amanuensis, it is at this point that Paul is thought to have taken the pen from the amanuensis and added his own handwritten notes. This action serves as a personal touch, further validating the letter's authenticity. See Fee, Thessalonians, 232–33; Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*, 429.

nominative of address, coupled with the ensuing commands in the imperative mood-forms, clearly demarcates this topic-comment unit. Additionally, the unique presence of the first person singular grammatical subject, as implied in ἐνορκίζω, lends further distinction to this unit.

The internal unity of this topic-comment unit is reinforced by the repeated use of the words ἀδελφοί, τοὺς ἀδελφούς, and τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς. Rather than being linked through explicit connective devices, the clause complexes are asyndetically connected. They function as integral parts of the rhematic process chains that anchor to the thematized action of the final greeting.

In terms of linguistic highlighting, the most distinguished lexicogrammatical element is the thematized element ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Its placement in the prime slot enhances its thematic prominence. Furthermore, among the finite verbs that act as predicates in the primary clauses, προσεύχεσθε and ἐνορκίζω, rendered in the imperfective aspect, are presented as foreground elements. Notably, ἐνορκίζω is further highlighted due to its grammatical subject being in the first person singular, indicating Paul as the primary author. This represents a marked shift from the collective authorial voice, previously denoted by first plural lexicogrammatical indicators, to a more individualized expression.

Metafunctional and Situational Features of the Language of 1 Thessalonians

The analysis of thematization reveals that the recipients in Thessalonica are the entities most frequently thematized in the first Thessalonian letter. This observation aligns with the understanding that they are the primary participants of the letter, being its recipients.

However, this inference is not necessarily self-evident. Given the length of the letter and the diverse issues addressed in the letter, other participants or entities might be thematized more frequently. Indeed, the first Thessalonian letter addresses a broad spectrum of subjects, encompassing a variety of theological concepts, moral values, and communal responsibilities. In such cases, nominal constituents representing these concepts are likely to be presented as thematic elements. Nevertheless, it is the Thessalonian recipients who are most frequently thematized in the letter, more than others. In thematizing the Thessalonian recipients, the lexicogrammatical patterns predominantly feature second person plural personal pronouns and intensive pronouns. Notably, when thematizing the Thessalonians with the intensive pronoun, it invariably manifests as αὐτοί in relation to οἴδατε, thereby intensifying the grammatical subject of the verb. This linguistic choice emphasizes their role not only as those possessing a well-informed state, as the senders intend to convey, but also as key participants contributing to the overall thematic development of the text. In addition, when the Thessalonians are featured as thematic elements, they are most often positioned in the prime slot of the clause complex where they occur. This placement signifies that they are not only presented as thematic but also serve as the starting point of the message conveyed by the clause complexes.

Following the Thessalonian recipients, the authorial figures emerge as the most frequently thematized participants. This thematic prominence is indicated grammatically through the use of proper names and first person pronouns (primarily plural and, on one occasion, singular, with the notable exception of the theme ἡμεῖς for the hortatory subjunctive verb νήφωμεν). Additionally, divine figures, such as God and the Lord Jesus,

also prominently feature in thematic occurrences. The frequency with which these groups are thematized varies in specific topic-comment units. In units that discuss the senders' missionary and pastoral endeavors during and subsequent to their time in Thessalonica, the senders themselves are frequently thematized. Conversely, in topic-comment units centered on the senders' intercessory prayers, divine figures are more frequently thematized.

The analysis of the lexicogrammatical elements and structures that convey the ideational meaning of the first Thessalonian letter confirms that its discourse construes the senders as those who have deep gratefulness on account of the Thessalonian recipients, and are unwavering in their pastoral duties and care regardless of their physical proximity to the Thessalonian believers. Their gratefulness is primarily expressed by mental processes of which the senders assume the role of senser and the phenomenon is the Thessalonian recipients. The portrayal of the senders as continuing in their pastoral work and attention for the Thessalonians is mainly communicated through verbal processes. These verbal processes include exhortative and directive utterances aimed at encouraging the further growth of the Thessalonians. All these mental and verbal processes form the mainline of the first Thessalonian letter, being presented in the imperfective aspect. In addition to these processes, the senders' recounting of shared experiences with the Thessalonian recipients during their time in Thessalonica is conveyed through a variety of processes, including existential, material, and relational. These processes collectively exemplify the senders' innocent and blameless approach to their work, illustrating it in varied facets. In the depiction of these processes, the perfective aspect is mainly employed, thereby serving as background in confirming and

further strengthening the positive personal relationship between the senders and the

recipients, as well as laying the foundation for the senders' ongoing pastoral work for the

Thessalonians, as executed through this letter.

Besides the ideational construal previously outlined as reasons for the senders'

gratefulness, another noteworthy conceptual portrayal concerning the Thessalonian

recipients is their depiction as being expected to engage in pastoral work similar to that of

the senders, directed towards their fellow church members. The depiction of the

Thessalonians in these roles is chiefly evidenced through verbal processes, wherein they

are presented as sayers, with their fellow church members assuming the role of receivers.

These verbal processes, with the Thessalonian recipients as primary participants, form the

mainline of the first Thessalonian letter, depicted in the imperfective aspect. Furthermore,

as the most notable feature, the Thessalonians are construed as being well-informed about

the senders' innocent and blameless character, demonstrated during and after their time in

Thessalonica, as well as about their imparted teachings. The Thessalonians'

understanding of these details is primarily illustrated by mental processes, wherein the

Thessalonian recipients assume the role of senser, with the senders and their work as the

phenomenon. In particular, among the mental processes involving the Thessalonians as

primary participants, the οἴδατε verb occurs frequently as the frontgrounded material,

being formed in the stative aspect. The Thessalonian recipients are notably depicted as

having a deep understanding of eschatological teachings, particularly those concerning

the day of the Lord. This portrayal suggests that, in the senders' view, the Thessalonians

neither face significant conceptual challenges nor misunderstand the fate of deceased

believers and the nature of the Lord's second coming. The eschatological content in this

letter is presented to lay the groundwork for the senders' exhortations and pastoral advice, enabling the Thessalonians to support their fellow church members and strengthen their communal bonds.

In terms of the interpersonal meanings, the language of the Thessalonian letter employed consistently fosters a positive relationship among the primary participants within the discourse. The senders invariably depict the recipients as exemplary believers and anticipate their continued growth based on their current virtuous actions. The senders note that the Thessalonian believers also hold a positive memory of them and are eager for a future in-person reunion. In emphasizing the Thessalonians' admirable qualities, the senders enlist various secondary participants to underscore these attributes. These include fellow believers from outside the Thessalonian church, who report on their commendable actions, Judean Christians whom the Thessalonians emulate in enduring sufferings from their own countrymen, and the divine figures who have elected and will preserve the Thessalonians. Moreover, the commendable qualities of the Thessalonians are highlighted by contrasting them with negatively portrayed secondary participants, such as persecutors, those committing adultery, and individuals unaware of the Lord's second coming. The invocation of negative behaviors, such as adultery and ignorance of the Lord's second coming, serves not to imply that the Thessalonians have committed these acts. Rather, it accentuates, by contrast, the praiseworthy nature of the Thessalonians who abstain from actions characteristic of the negatively depicted secondary participants.

The grammatical mood-forms employed in the Thessalonian letter also bolsters the portrayal of the Thessalonian believers as commendable and worthy of praise. When such qualities are described, indicative mood-forms are used to assertively state these

commendable qualities as undeniable truths. Moreover, the use of imperative mood-forms or first person plural hortatory subjunctives, which dictate actions required of the Thessalonians, consistently serves to underscore the senders' expectation of their continued advancement and augmentation of their already praiseworthy deeds. These mood-forms, used to guide the Thessalonian recipients' actions within the Thessalonian letter, are not applied in situational contexts where the Thessalonians are construed as lacking comprehension or failing to commit to these actions. Instead, they reflect the senders' expectation for further growth of the Thessalonians' existing accomplishments and the similar pastoral care towards their fellow church members, mirroring the care provided by the senders. Regarding the optative mood-forms, the senders express a hope that God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will facilitate a personal meeting with the Thessalonian recipients and preserve and keep the recipients holy according to divine will. These optative mood-forms convey the senders' ardent desire to reunite with the Thessalonian believers and to maintain their spiritual integrity, despite the current challenges in revisiting the Thessalonian church, thus reinforcing the personal bond between the senders and recipients.

Regarding the textual meanings in the first Thessalonian letter, it is most noteworthy that the letter's textual structure follows a coherent semantic flow. This flow begins with confirming and further strengthening the relationship between the senders and the recipients, including expressions of gratitude, reminders of the senders' missionary work among the Thessalonians, and an account of ongoing pastoral endeavors in their absence. It then transitions to presenting a variety of exhortations and encouragements, covering topics such as holiness, brotherly love, those who sleep in

death, and the day of the Lord. Between these two principal sets of semantic units of the letter—one emphasizing relationship reinforcement and the other focused on practical exhortations—two intercessory prayers by the senders are strategically positioned. The first is nestled between the segments on relationship strengthening and practical advice, while the second bridges the gap between the practical exhortations and the concluding requests and greetings. Therefore, these intercessory prayer units function as transitional elements, smoothly linking the two primary semantic units of 1 Thessalonians, each characterized by relationship strengthening and practical advice.

In analyzing the linguistic emphasis in 1 Thessalonians, it is particularly noteworthy that the most prominent elements are the references to the Thessalonian recipients, especially when addressed with the second person plural personal pronoun as thematized material, and their actions, characterized by the verb οἴδατε in the stative aspect. Additionally, the frequent occurrences of the intensive pronoun and the personal pronouns in prime positions of the primary clauses further signify their importance. These linguistically highlighted elements are not confined to one portion of the letter but occur throughout the Thessalonian text. Therefore, it can be inferred that the main discussions of 1 Thessalonians are intricately woven around the senders' concern for the Thessalonian recipients and their well-informed status regarding the intentions and messages the senders are conveying in the letter.

Given the linguistic features of 1 Thessalonians discussed thus far, it can be observed that the text construes a context of situation wherein the senders are engaged in immediate pastoral work with the Thessalonian recipients following their forceful expulsion from Thessalonica, and ongoing teaching and guidance despite their absence

from the Thessalonian church. Since the unintended separation, the senders have made efforts to return to the church and have continued their pastoral duties through various means, including sending Timothy. Now, through this letter, the senders endeavor to persist in their pastoral responsibilities, aiming to remedy any potential gaps in the Thessalonians' faith life resulting from their absence. Furthermore, they guide the Thessalonian believers to continue building their church and supporting their fellow members with various practical guidelines and directives, doing so with the expectation that the believers are capable of fulfilling these roles even in the senders' absence.

Paul's Commitment to Maintaining and Strengthening Relational Ties with the Thessalonian Believers (2 Thess 1:1–12)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1
[1.1] Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ·

Thematic Unit 2
[2] χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

[3] Εὐχαριστεῖν **ὀφείλομεν** τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί,
    καθὼς ἄξιόν ἐστιν,
    ὅτι ὑπεραυξάνει ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν
    καὶ πλεονάζει ἡ ἀγάπη ἑνὸς ἑκάστου πάντων ὑμῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους,
        [4] ὥστε αὐτοὺς ἡμᾶς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐγκαυχᾶσθαι ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τοῦ θεοῦ ὑπὲρ
        τῆς ὑπομονῆς ὑμῶν καὶ πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς διωγμοῖς ὑμῶν καὶ ταῖς
        θλίψεσιν
            αἷς ἀνέχεσθε,

Thematic Unit 3
[5] ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ καταξιωθῆναι ὑμᾶς τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ,
    ὑπὲρ ἧς καὶ πάσχετε,
    [6] εἴπερ δίκαιον παρὰ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι τοῖς θλίβουσιν ὑμᾶς θλῖψιν
    [7] καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς θλιβομένοις ἄνεσιν μεθ' ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ κυρίου
Ἰησοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ μετ' ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ [8] ἐν φλογὶ πυρός,
    διδόντος ἐκδίκησιν τοῖς μὴ εἰδόσι θεὸν καὶ τοῖς μὴ ὑπακούουσιν τῷ
    εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ,
        [9] οἵτινες δίκην τίσουσιν ὄλεθρον αἰώνιον ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου καὶ
        ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ,
            [10] ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐνδοξασθῆναι ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ καὶ θαυμασθῆναι
            ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύσασιν,
                ὅτι ἐπιστεύθη τὸ μαρτύριον ἡμῶν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς,
            ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ.

> [11] εἰς ὃ καὶ <u>προσευχόμεθα</u> πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν,
>   ἵνα ὑμᾶς <u>ἀξιώσῃ</u> τῆς κλήσεως ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν
>   καὶ <u>πληρώσῃ</u> πᾶσαν εὐδοκίαν ἀγαθωσύνης καὶ ἔργον πίστεως ἐν δυνάμει,
>   [12] ὅπως <u>ἐνδοξασθῇ</u> τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν,
>   καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν αὐτῷ, κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

The initial topic-comment unit of 2 Thessalonians, spanning 1:1–12, comprises three thematic units, each delineated by the grammatical subjects in the nominative case of the primary clauses: Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος (1:1), χάρις . . . καὶ εἰρήνη (1:2), and ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ (1:5). Each of these three thematized elements occupies a prime position, thus serving as the initial focus of the message conveyed by each respective clause.

Similar to 1 Thessalonians, the opening topic-comment unit of 2 Thessalonians commences by thematizing the authorial figures of the letter using their proper names. This is followed by rhematic elements that reference the Thessalonian believers as recipients of the letter, thereby establishing these figures as primary participants within the discourse. Also, in a manner akin to 1 Thessalonians, the second thematic unit is characterized by the thematic element of the χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη greeting phrase. This is complemented by rhematic elements that include a thanksgiving statement, additional circumstantial elements, and justifications, the latter being specifically detailed within the subordinate ὅτι clause complex.[1] These elements collectively mirror those found in 1 Thessalonians, notably in how the initial act of greeting, which establishes a foundational communicative connection, is enhanced by expressing gratitude. Such a structure in both

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[1] The additional circumstantial elements encompass the direction of the thanksgiving (τῷ θεῷ), the temporal dimension (πάντοτε), and the causative factor (περὶ ὑμῶν). Structurally, these elements are also analogous to those found in 1 Thessalonians.

letters not only initiates an interactional bond but also enriches it, highlighting the recipients' contributions and virtues, thereby strengthening the relationship between the senders and recipients. Subsequently, an abstract conceptual entity, ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, is introduced as another thematic element, thus establishing the third thematic unit within the current topic-comment structure. The theme ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ is further developed through various rhematic elements, including its purposive qualities (εἰς τὸ καταξιωθῆναι . . .), the supposition of the condition associated with it (εἴπερ δίκαιον παρὰ θεῷ . . .), and the resultant volitive implications it entails (εἰς ὃ καὶ προσευχόμεθα . . .).[2]

The inclusion of the thematic unit centered around the theme ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ within the current topic-comment unit is underpinned by its role as a continuation of the discourse on the sufferings endured by the Thessalonian recipients. While thematic unit 2 briefly addresses the persecutions and afflictions faced by the Thessalonians, thematic unit 3 delves more deeply into the specifics of these adversities. It discusses the inherent purpose of these hardships, the contrasting destinies awaiting the persecutors and the persecuted Thessalonians, and the senders' supportive actions for the Thessalonians in light of their trials.

Ideational Meaning

In the topic-comment unit under analysis, four primary, independent clause complexes are identified, yet only one of these contains a verb that serves as the predicate of the

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[2] For an analysis of the conjunctive device εἴπερ as a conditional particle introducing the protasis of a conditional structure, refer to Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*, 464.

primary clause; the other three are presented as verbless clauses. Notably, the verb

ὀφείλομεν in 1:3 fulfills this role, signifying the senders' action. This verb is presented in

the imperfective aspect, denoting a process as ongoing and in progress within the

discourse, thus explicitly contributing to the constitution of the mainline of the discourse.

Thus, within the current topic-comment unit, the clause complex featuring ὀφείλομεν as

its predicate is more prominently foregrounded compared to the verbless clauses,

particularly in terms of the processes indicative of their aspectual semantic features.

Regarding the type of process, the verb ὀφείλομεν is characterized as a mental

process, reflecting an internal compulsion or obligation and a cognitive recognition of a

moral or social duty, with the senders functioning as the senser. The mental process is

further depicted by the object of this process, grammaticalized by the rank-shifted

infinitive clause centered on εὐχαριστεῖν, another mental process. This structural

configuration suggests layered cognitive and emotive depth, indicating a complex

interplay between the cognitive recognition of duty and the emotive response of

gratitude. The choice of ὀφείλομεν as the predicate places a pronounced emphasis on the

obligation aspect of giving thanks. This expression of gratitude is thus portrayed not as a

spontaneous or voluntary action, but as a necessary, almost compulsory response,

imbuing the act of thanksgiving with a sense of imperativeness and importance.

The subordinate ὅτι clause following the primary clause complex, centered around

the verb ὀφείλομεν, illuminates the situational context of the senders' obliged recognition

of their thankfulness. Within the ὅτι clause, the senders articulate the reasons for their

compelled acknowledgment of gratitude. Most notably, they construe the Thessalonians'

abundant growth in faith and love as achievements realized amidst the persecutions and

afflictions they endure. The senders seem to recognize that even after they themselves were forcibly expelled from Thessalonica, the Thessalonian believers continue to face persecutions from their countrymen.[3] Despite these challenges, in the senders' perception, the Thessalonians have shown remarkable growth in faith and love towards their fellow church members.

Based on this clause complex's structure centered around the predicate ὀφείλομεν, the connotation of obligation in giving thanks does not imply any hindrance or reluctance in the act, nor does it suggest a more formal or distant approach, indicating detachment from the act of thanksgiving.[4] Rather, it conveys a more profound and compelling sense of duty, merging a deep sense of gratitude with an inherent imperative. This blend of obligation and thankfulness serves to convey a heartfelt and earnest commitment to expressing gratitude, reinforcing the sincerity and depth of the senders' feelings towards the recipients. Such a construction emphasizes that the act of giving thanks, while being a duty, is also a genuine expression of appreciation and recognition of the Thessalonians' faith and perseverance.

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[3] The thanksgiving statement in 1 Thessalonians acknowledges the afflictions experienced by the Thessalonians (δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει in 1 Thess 1:6). Additionally, elsewhere in the letter, the senders mention the Thessalonians' sufferings, drawing parallels to those endured by believers in Judea (1 Thess 2:14–16). Considering the time that has passed since Pauline mission team's expulsion and the interval between the first and second letters, it appears that the Thessalonians' trials and persecutions have continued beyond the senders' departure from Thessalonica. As a result, the senders exhibit particular concern for the ongoing persecutions and sufferings of the Thessalonians, addressing this critical issue in the current, second Thessalonian letter.

[4] Numerous critics view the use of ὀφείλομεν, along with καθὼς ἄξιόν ἐστιν, in expressing gratitude as distinctly distant and restrained compared to the intimacy and warmth found in other thanksgivings of Pauline letters. Therefore, they regard these linguistic elements as further evidence supporting the theory that 2 Thessalonians may not have been authored by Paul. See Dibelius, *An die Thessalonicher*, 33; Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" 137; Trilling, *Zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher*, 44; Collins, "Second Epistle," 222–23; Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 24; Furnish, *1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians*, 132.

Interpersonal Meaning

The language of the current topic-comment unit, specifically aimed at enacting the interpersonal relationship between participants, mirrors the established extralinguistic first-order social roles and relationships, with the senders assuming an authoritative role, due to their apostolic status and foundational role in the church, thus exerting influence over the Thessalonian believers. As is typical in most Pauline letters, the senders here express their gratitude to God, citing reasons that are attributable to the Thessalonian recipients. In Paul's thanksgiving statements, the recipients' current status and experiences are often inferred when reasons for gratitude are articulated. In the case of 2 Thessalonians, the senders' mention of their gratitude to God unequivocally indicates their awareness of the Thessalonian recipients' ongoing persecutions and afflictions. Despite these hardships, the Thessalonians are commended for their burgeoning faith and increasing love towards fellow church members. Also, within this topic-comment unit, the senders are portrayed as providing an elucidation of the issue they wish to address. Their teaching focuses on the Thessalonians' sufferings, offering a new perspective. In this exposition, they suggest that the current sufferings of the Thessalonians are intended to deem them worthy of the kingdom of God. Furthermore, the senders are depicted as praying for the Thessalonian recipients. The third thematic unit goes beyond simply defining ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ. Instead, as demonstrated in verses 11–12 through the purpose statement expressed in the prepositional phrase εἰς, in conjunction with the relative pronoun ὃ, anaphorically referring to ἔνδειγμα, this invocation of God's judgment on the persecutors and His glorified presence before the Thessalonian believers

serves to embody the senders' continuous prayers for the Thessalonians to meet the expectations of God's calling and preservation.

Regarding the pattern of grammatical mood-forms, the indicative is predominantly used when the senders describe their actions in relation to the Thessalonian recipients. Their acts of giving thanks to God (εὐχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν), owing to the commendable actions and status of the recipients, and their prayers for them (προσευχόμεθα) are all presented using indicative mood-form verbs, thereby assertively stating these actions as undeniable facts. Furthermore, in portraying the commendable actions and current status of the Thessalonian recipients, the senders utilize indicative mood-form verbs. As a result, the recipients' significant growth in faith (ὑπεραυξάνει), their practice of brotherly love towards fellow church members (πλεονάζει), and their endurance of persecutions and sufferings (ἀνέχεσθε and πάσχετε) are all depicted as factual realities from the senders' perspective.

In this topic-comment unit, more marked grammatical mood-forms than the indicative are also employed. Notably, the subjunctive mood-forms are predominantly used when the senders express their aspirational expectations for the recipients. With verbs in the subjunctive mood such as ἀξιώσῃ, πληρώσῃ, and ἐνδοξασθῇ, the senders envisage highly favorable and auspicious outcomes involving the Thessalonians.

Therefore, the first topic-comment unit of 2 Thessalonians enacts the interpersonal dynamics between the letter's senders and recipients, portraying the senders as authoritative and influential figures over the Thessalonian recipients. Simultaneously, the senders exhibit a highly positive and appreciative evaluative stance towards the recipients, praising their current actions and states.

Textual Meaning

As typically observed in Pauline letters, the openings feature an introduction of the letter's sender(s) and recipient(s), followed by greetings and a thanksgiving statement, accompanied by its rationale. The opening of 2 Thessalonians precisely follows this pattern. Therefore, the first and second thematic units form integral structural components of the letter, and they are coherently intertwined.

However, at first glance, thematic unit 3 might seem somewhat incongruous within the structure of the letter's opening. Contrary to 1 Thessalonians, where thematic units following the thanksgiving statement are structurally connected through the inferential or explanatory conjunction γάρ, thereby semantically linking to the thanksgiving, in 2 Thessalonians, the thematic element of the third thematic unit appears to stand independently, without any conjunctive devices linking it to the previous unit. Nonetheless, the rhematic elements within the third thematic unit echo terms noted in the previous thematic unit, specifically characterizing the endurance of sufferings (e.g., θλίψεσιν in v. 4 and θλίβουσιν, θλῖψιν, and θλιβομένοις in vv. 6–7; αἷς ἀνέχεσθε in v. 4 and ὑπὲρ ἧς καὶ πάσχετε in v. 5). In this regard, the theme, ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, pertaining to the sufferings endured by the Thessalonians and inflicted by the persecutors, is presented as an extension of one of the reasons for the senders' thanksgiving for the Thessalonians, initially introduced at the end of the preceding thematic unit.

Regarding linguistic highlighting, the most significant instance occurs with the use of the predicate verb ὀφείλομεν in the primary clause, contrasting with the predominant verbless primary clause complexes in this topic-comment unit. Depicted in

the imperfective aspect, the verb ὀφείλομεν significantly contributes to constituting the mainline of the discourse. However, this does not imply that other primary clauses are insignificant in shaping the discourse plane of the letter; despite being verbless, they implicitly convey the senders' actions. Nevertheless, the primary clause with ὀφείλομεν as its predicate is more prominent in clearly delineating the senders' actions compared to the verbless primary clauses. Moreover, the employment of ὀφείλομεν in expressing the senders' gratitude, along with the grammaticalization of the act of thanking into the complement slot of the clause structure in the infinitive form, stands out as notably distinctive. This is particularly evident when contrasted with the typical use of εὐχαριστέω or εὐχαριστοῦμεν for expressing gratitude in other Pauline letters.

In summary, akin to 1 Thessalonians, the initial topic-comment unit of 2 Thessalonians similarly highlights the senders' commitment to maintaining and strengthening relational ties with the Thessalonian believers. This dedication is manifested in the greetings, augmented by the thanksgiving, and further in the instructions regarding the Thessalonians' current experiences, particularly their endurance of suffering. It also offers a fresh perspective on these experiences and details the senders' response, which includes ongoing prayers for the Thessalonians.

Paul's Instructions on The Day of The Lord to the Thessalonians (2 Thess 2:1–15)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1
[2.1]Ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡμῶν ἐπισυναγωγῆς ἐπ' αὐτόν, [2] εἰς τὸ μὴ ταχέως σαλευθῆναι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ νοὸς μηδὲ θροεῖσθαι μήτε διὰ πνεύματος μήτε διὰ λόγου μήτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ὡς δι' ἡμῶν,
     ὡς ὅτι ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου.

³ μή τις ὑμᾶς **ἐξαπατήσῃ** κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον·
    ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀποστασία πρῶτον
    καὶ ἀποκαλυφθῇ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, ⁴ ὁ ἀντικείμενος
    καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα,
        ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσαι ἀποδεικνύντα ἑαυτὸν
            ὅτι ἔστιν θεός.

⁵ οὐ **μνημονεύετε**
    ὅτι ἔτι ὢν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ταῦτα ἔλεγον ὑμῖν;

⁶ καὶ νῦν τὸ κατέχον **οἴδατε**, εἰς τὸ ἀποκαλυφθῆναι αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ καιρῷ·

Thematic Unit 2
⁷ τὸ γὰρ μυστήριον ἤδη **ἐνεργεῖται** τῆς ἀνομίας·

Thematic Unit 3
μόνον ὁ κατέχων ἄρτι
    ἕως ἐκ μέσου γένηται.

Thematic Unit 4
⁸ καὶ τότε **ἀποκαλυφθήσεται** ὁ ἄνομος,
    ὃν ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἀνελεῖ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ
    καὶ καταργήσει τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ,
    ⁹ οὗ ἔστιν ἡ παρουσία κατ' ἐνέργειαν τοῦ Σατανᾶ ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει καὶ σημείοις
    καὶ τέρασιν ψεύδους ¹⁰ καὶ ἐν πάσῃ ἀπάτῃ ἀδικίας τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις,
        ἀνθ' ὧν τὴν ἀγάπην τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἐδέξαντο εἰς τὸ σωθῆναι αὐτούς·

Thematic Unit 5
¹¹ καὶ διὰ τοῦτο **πέμπει** αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς ἐνέργειαν πλάνης εἰς τὸ πιστεῦσαι αὐτοὺς τῷ
ψεύδει,
    ¹² ἵνα κριθῶσιν πάντες οἱ μὴ πιστεύσαντες τῇ ἀληθείᾳ ἀλλὰ εὐδοκήσαντες τῇ
    ἀδικίᾳ.

Thematic Unit 6
¹³ Ἡμεῖς δὲ **ὀφείλομεν** εὐχαριστεῖν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοὶ ἠγαπημένοι
ὑπὸ κυρίου,
    ὅτι εἵλατο ὑμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἀπαρχὴν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος καὶ πίστει
    ἀληθείας,
        ¹⁴ εἰς ὃ ἐκάλεσεν ὑμᾶς διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἡμῶν, εἰς περιποίησιν δόξης τοῦ
        κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

 ¹⁵ ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, **στήκετε**,

καὶ **κρατεῖτε** τὰς παραδόσεις
ἃς <u>ἐδιδάχθητε</u> εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι᾽ ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν.

The second topic-comment unit of 2 Thessalonians comprises six thematic units, each delineated by an entity grammaticalized in the nominative case within its respective primary clause: sequentially, these are τις (2:3), τὸ . . . μυστήριον . . . τῆς ἀνομίας (2:7), ὁ κατέχων (2:7), ὁ ἄνομος (2:8), ὁ θεός (2:11), and ἡμεῖς (2:13). Among these thematized elements, the themes τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἀνομίας and ἡμεῖς occupy prime slots in their respective primary clauses, while the remaining four themes are positioned in subsequent ones. Therefore, the themes τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἀνομίας and ἡμεῖς stand out as the most prominently foregrounded elements among others in this topic-comment unit, with regards to thematic emphasis and positioning.

Particularly, in comparison to the thematized elements encountered thus far, including those in 1 Thessalonians, this topic-comment unit distinguishes itself with the emergence of new secondary participants as thematic elements, in addition to ὁ θεός. Moreover, these newly emerged participants, thematized here, are not individuals with whom the primary participants of the letter have interacted in concrete, real-life situations. Instead, they are akin to indefinite personalities, such as τις, or conceptual figures like ὁ κατέχων and ὁ ἄνομος. From the detailed presentation of various figures and entities as thematic elements, it becomes apparent that the current topic-comment unit is specifically concerned with abstract concepts and entities, particularly those related to the Thessalonian believers' understanding of the eschatological events surrounding the parousia.

Ideational Meaning

Given the prepositional phrase at the beginning of the first thematic unit, ὑπὲρ τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡμῶν ἐπισυναγωγῆς ἐπ' αὐτόν, it can be deduced that the ideational focus of this topic-comment unit is centered on eschatological events, specifically pertaining to the second coming of the Lord. The process associated with the prepositional phrase is conveyed by the verb ἐρωτῶμεν, typically employed to denote an act of beseeching or exhorting, a usage also found in similar contexts within 1 Thessalonians. However, the presence of the verb denoting the senders' request for the recipients to take action does not self-evidently guarantee that this topic-comment unit is centered on parenetic content. The verb ἐρωτῶμεν acts as a rhematic component within a process chain, instrumental in elaborating τις, the thematized element, within its thematic unit. The subsequent thematized elements following the theme τις, up to thematic unit 4, unveil the senders' principal intent: to inform or, more specifically, remind the Thessalonian recipients of what they taught. This objective is achieved by outlining the actions and roles of the thematized figures and entities, specifically in relation to the events surrounding the second coming of the Lord.[5]

In this topic-comment unit, the mainline of discourse is composed of the following verbs in the imperfective aspect: ἐρωτῶμεν (2:1), μνημονεύετε (2:5), ἐνεργεῖται (2:7), πέμπει (2:11), ὀφείλομεν (2:13), στήκετε (2:15), and κρατεῖτε (2:15). The patterns of these imperfective verbs demonstrate a range of primary participants in the processes

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[5] The verbs ἐνεργεῖται (2:7), γένηται (2:7), ἀποκαλυφθήσεται (2:8), and οὐκ ἐδέξαντο (2:10) are presented as serving in rhematic process chains, intricately detailing the identification of the thematized figures in correlation with the Thessalonian recipients' understanding of the parousia. The utilization of these processes in outlining figures associated with the second coming of Jesus mirrors the discourse features of this topic-comment unit, predominantly focusing on instructing or informing about the event.

of this unit, including the letter senders and recipients, God, and the abstract conceptual entity, the hiddenness of lawlessness.[6] Examining the sequential patterns of processes depicted in the imperfective aspect, the overarching semantic landscape within the mainline of discourse in this topic-comment unit can be described as follows: the senders' primary concern is to ensure the Thessalonian recipients' comprehension of the parousia. This is achieved by reminding them of the instructions given when the senders were present among them. Additionally, the senders express their desire for the Thessalonian recipients not to be misled by any false claims regarding the parousia, even in their absence.

Among non-imperfective verbs, ἐξαπατήσῃ, with τις as the primary participant, is distinguished by its use in the perfective aspect, serving as background material. This contextualizes the senders' request for the recipients not to be shaken or disturbed by a false claim that the day of the Lord has come. Another non-imperfective verb, οἴδατε, is in the stative aspect, functioning as frontground material within this topic-comment unit. By employing this verb in the stative aspect, it highly emphasizes that the Thessalonian recipients possess a fully knowledgeable understanding of what the senders had taught regarding the eschatological events surrounding the second coming of the Lord. Consequently, it may be prudently deduced that the act of instruction within this topic-comment unit, especially regarding the events of the parousia, primarily serves as a

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[6] Given the verb ἀποκαλυφθήσεται with its grammatical subject ὁ ἄνομος (2:8) and the temporal adverbs delineating the sequence of events around the second coming of Jesus (ἤδη in 2:7, ἄρτι in 2:7, and τότε in 2:8), the nominal word group τὸ μυστήριον is aptly translated as 'hiddenness' or similar terms. As Brookins states: "'Mystery of lawlessness' and 'man of lawlessness,' therefore, complement one another: the mystery is at work now, in a hidden way, and the man of lawlessness will set to work at an appointed time in the future, after he is revealed" (*First and Second Thessalonians*, 175). For a similar perspective and more comprehensive explanations, consult Witherington, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 222; Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*, 529–30.

reinforcement of prior teachings. This reinforcement, predicated on the Thessalonians'

existing knowledge and comprehension, functions as a safeguard against the potential

spread of erroneous beliefs about eschatological events in the absence of the senders.

<p style="text-align:center;">Interpersonal Meaning</p>

Regardless of whether 2 Thessalonians is viewed as an authentic Pauline letter sent to the

Thessalonian believers or as a pseudonymous work addressed to either the Thessalonians

or others, most interpretations of 2 Thess 2:1–4 suggest that the recipients faced serious

problems due to a misunderstanding of Paul's teachings about the second coming of the

Lord. This misunderstanding, in turn, led to their disturbance, and it was fueled by the

spread of a false claim that the day of the Lord had already arrived. Accordingly, whether

the author is Paul or a pseudonymous writer, this letter was crafted with the purpose of

correcting the recipients' misunderstandings regarding the parousia.[7] However, upon

closer examination of the lexicogrammatical structures in the current topic-comment unit,

it is not readily apparent that the senders are addressing the recipients' misconceptions

regarding the eschatological events they had previously taught or the prevalence of false

claims at work within the Thessalonian church.

In 2:3, the senders caution the Thessalonian recipients against deception, noting

that no one should convince them in any way with false claims that the day of the Lord

has already arrived. This caution is expressed using the verb ἐξαπατήσῃ, paired with the

negative particle μή. The use of the subjunctive mood-form verb ἐξαπατήσῃ, with τις as

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[7] See Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 192; Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 528–29; Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica*, 62–64; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 183–86; Gupta, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 222–26; Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?"162.

its subject, allows the senders to project a potential situation. They caution the recipients

against the possibility of being deceived by someone making false claims by any means.

This projection is not a report or assertion that the recipients are or have been deceived,

but rather a preemptive warning to safeguard them against such a scenario.[8] Additionally,

by designating the grammatical person of the subjunctive mood-form verb as an

indefinite individual, represented by τις, the senders emphasize a hypothetical situation,

rather than one the recipients are currently experiencing. Furthermore, when the senders

identify potential sources of the false claim in 2:2, they do not pinpoint these as the

definitive originators of the claim. Instead, they enumerate possible sources that might

approach the Thessalonian believers with such misinformation. The combination of

ἐξαπατήσῃ in the subjunctive mood-form, the indefinite personality τις as its grammatical

subject, and the listing of potential sources allows us to infer that the senders are

preemptively warning the Thessalonians, anticipating a potential situation.

In the initial topic-comment unit, the senders address the persecutions and

afflictions currently endured by the Thessalonian recipients. They express a particular

concern for these challenges, especially because they persist during the senders' absence

from Thessalonica, leaving the believers to endure these difficulties without the guidance

and support of their church founders. Consistent with this focus, in the second topic-

comment unit, the senders address the issue of deceptive teaching, particularly

concerning the second coming of the Lord, that may arise among the Thessalonian

believers in their absence. To preemptively guide the Thessalonians, as highlighted in

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[8] Porter, *Idioms*, 59. Porter references J. H. Moulton's observation that several instances of negated third person aorist subjunctives are employed hortatively, rather than for reporting or asserting. Following Moulton's suggestion, μή τις ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατήσῃ could be translated as "Let no one deceive you." See Moulton, *Prolegomena*, 178.

2:15, the senders instruct the recipients to adhere to what they have been taught through the senders' words and their letter, referring to them as traditions (παραδόσεις). From the senders' perspective, steadfast adherence to these traditions is crucial for safeguarding against any false claims during their absence.

Therefore, in this topic-comment unit, the Thessalonian believers are not portrayed as already deceived and disturbed by a false claim that has permeated the church, nor by their own misunderstanding of Paul's teachings. Instead, the senders project a potential scenario where a false claim might infiltrate the Thessalonian church during the continued absence of the Pauline church founders. In instructing the Thessalonians to preempt such a situation, the senders explicitly depict their recipients as well-informed about the eschatological events surrounding the parousia. They use the verb οἴδατε, in the indicative mood-form, to present this understanding as a factual reality. From the senders' perspective, the Thessalonians do not have any misunderstanding or misconceptions about the parousia. Therefore, the senders remind them of their teachings, appealing to the Thessalonians' well-established knowledge of the subject. Subsequently, they direct the Thessalonians to stand firm and hold onto the traditions, employing imperative mood-form verbs (στήκετε and κρατεῖτε in 2:15). This instruction anticipates the Thessalonians' ability to adhere to these directives effectively.[9]

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[9] In addition to the senders' perception of their Thessalonian recipients as possessing comprehensive knowledge of the eschatological teachings they conveyed, various lexicogrammatical elements and structures are employed to portray the Thessalonian recipients from the senders' perspective in a highly positive and affectionate manner. In 2:13, the senders once again express gratitude to God for the recipients, using the exact same predicate structure as in 2 Thess 1:3, with the predicate ὀφείλομεν and its rank-shifted infinitive clause acting as the predicate's object, εὐχαριστεῖν. However, the note of gratitude here is more pronounced than the one that appeared earlier, as it incorporates a nominalized participle, ἠγαπημένοι, modifying the nominative of address, ἀδελφοί. Notably, the substantive participle is depicted in the stative aspect, emphasizing the current status of the Thessalonian recipients as being loved by the Lord from the senders' perspective. Furthermore, in the subordinate ὅτι clause complex connected to the primary

Textual Meaning

Starting with the verb ἐρωτῶμεν and concluding with the imperative mood-form verbs στήκετε and κρατεῖτε, this topic-comment unit conveys the idea that the instructional material aims to provide the recipients with practical guidance to prepare for potential misleading assertions regarding Jesus' parousia. The use of the inferential conjunctive word group ἄρα οὖν followed by the imperative verb structures at the end of the topic-comment unit supports such semantic progression that the instructions are intended to prompt the recipients to take action in preempting deception and disturbance caused by false claims that might find their way into the Thessalonian church, even in the absence of the senders, who are the founders and leaders of the church.

In this topic-comment unit, the most linguistically prominent element can be found in the occurrence of the verb οἴδατε in 1:6, which is depicted in the stative aspect and thus stands out as frontground material. The senders' perception of the Thessalonian recipients as possessing complete knowledge of the eschatological events surrounding the second coming of the Lord, which had been taught by the senders, is the central focus both in terms of lexicogrammatical structure and semantic content. Although they function in subordinate clauses, other stative verbs can be observed in this topic-comment unit: ἐνέστηκεν (2:2), included as a process in the potential false claim that the day of the Lord has come, and the nominalized participle ἠγαπημένοι, which functions as a modifier for the nominative of address ἀδελφοί, referring to the Thessalonian recipients.

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clause containing ὀφείλομεν as its predicate, the Thessalonians are construed in relation to the acts of God performed on their behalf. These acts are characterized by His selection and calling of the Thessalonians. Thus, the language used in this topic-comment unit illustrates that the Thessalonian recipients are portrayed by the senders in a highly positive light, akin to their depiction in 1 Thessalonians.

Considering the varied meanings categorized according to their metafunctional semantic features, the topic of this larger semantic unit may be defined as the semiotic actions of Paul and his co-senders in instructing the Thessalonians. The comment can be described as the senders' reminder of previously taught eschatological teachings, appealing to the recipients' existing knowledge and understanding to pre-empt false claims related to eschatological events.

In particular, regarding the focused discussion of eschatological events within this topic-comment unit, it should be noted that the timing of the Lord's second coming, whether imminent or delayed, is not the primary concern of the senders. The focus of this segment is on addressing any false claims that the day of the Lord has already arrived, which could potentially arise at any time and propagated through various means. In response to such a scenario, the senders emphasize that God has not destined the Thessalonian believers to be led astray by the lawless one, who acts in accordance with Satan's influence. Instead, they are chosen by God for salvation and called to obtain the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. These points are thoroughly explored in thematic units 5 and 6. Particularly, statements in these units employ inferential conjunctive word groups like διὰ τοῦτο (2:11) and ἄρα οὖν (2:15), positioning them as conclusive or inferential remarks following the detailed discussion of eschatological events surrounding the day of the Lord in earlier thematic units.

Thus, rather than focusing on the timing of the parousia, the senders' main objective is to reassure the Thessalonian recipients of their ultimate status at the Lord's return and to caution them against being deceived or disturbed by false claims lacking accurate knowledge of the eschatological teachings previously imparted by the senders.

Even if potential false claims infiltrate the Thessalonian church during the absence of its founders and leaders, like in the present situation, the believers should remain steadfast and adhere to the teachings imparted by the senders.

Paul's Intercessory Prayer for the Thessalonians and Prayer Requests (2 Thess 2:16—3:5)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1
[16] Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς καὶ θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν, ὁ ἀγαπήσας ἡμᾶς καὶ δοὺς παράκλησιν αἰωνίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα ἀγαθὴν ἐν χάριτι, [17] **παρακαλέσαι** ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας

καὶ **στηρίξαι** ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ ἀγαθῷ.

Thematic Unit 2
[3.1] Τὸ λοιπὸν **προσεύχεσθε**, ἀδελφοί, περὶ ἡμῶν,
    ἵνα ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου <u>τρέχῃ</u>
    καὶ <u>δοξάζηται</u>
        καθὼς καὶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς,
    [2] καὶ ἵνα <u>ρυσθῶμεν</u> ἀπὸ τῶν ἀτόπων καὶ πονηρῶν ἀνθρώπων,

οὐ γὰρ πάντων ἡ πίστις.

Thematic Unit 3
[3] πιστὸς δέ **ἐστιν** ὁ κύριος,
    ὃς <u>στηρίξει</u> ὑμᾶς
    καὶ <u>φυλάξει</u> ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.

[4] **πεποίθαμεν** δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς,
    ὅτι
        ἃ <u>παραγγέλλομεν</u>
    καὶ <u>ποιεῖτε</u>
    καὶ <u>ποιήσετε</u>.

Thematic Unit 4
[5] ὁ δὲ κύριος **κατευθύναι** ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας εἰς τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ εἰς τὴν ὑπομονὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

The third topic-comment unit in 2 Thessalonians, covering 2:16 to 3:5, comprises four thematic units. These are distinguished by respective thematic elements that mark each unit's semantic boundaries. In sequential, the thematized elements are: αὐτὸς . . . ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς καὶ θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν, ὁ ἀγαπήσας ἡμᾶς καὶ δοὺς παράκλησιν αἰωνίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα ἀγαθὴν ἐν χάριτι (2:16), ἡ πίστις (3:2), ὁ κύριος (3:3), and ὁ . . . κύριος (3:5). Within this group of four thematic elements, αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος . . . ἐν χάριτι in 2:16 and ὁ κύριος in 3:5 hold prime positions in their respective primary clause complexes. As a result, they emerge as the most prominent thematic elements in this topic-comment unit.

Similar to the topic-comment units identified as Paul's intercessory prayers in 1 Thessalonians, the current unit in 2 Thessalonians predominantly features divine figures as thematic elements. Therefore, it can be inferred that this unit also represents an intercessory prayer by the senders, mediating between God and the recipients. Indeed, similar to those in 1 Thessalonians, the divine figures thematized in this unit are elaborated upon through process chains expressed in the optative mood-from verbs. Furthermore, akin to the structure of 1 Thessalonians, this topic-comment unit in 2 Thessalonians is situated between two others. Specifically, it follows the unit where the semiotic act of instructions is presented as governing and precedes another unit characterized by acts of exhortations to the recipients. Thus, this topic-comment unit distinctly serves a transitional role, strategically positioned between the two units to facilitate a smooth structural and semantic progression.

Ideational Meaning

Regarding process types and associated participants, divine figures, particularly the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father, are represented as agents in material processes. These processes are conveyed through the verbs παρακαλέσαι and στηρίξαι in 2:17, and κατευθύναι in 3:5. Commonly all these material processes take the hearts of the Thessalonians as goals. Thus, the proactive engagements of God and Jesus, directed towards the hearts of the Thessalonians, form an ideational focus of this topic-comment unit. Moreover, these material processes are presented in the perfective aspect, portraying the actions of the divine figures for the recipients as complete and whole. Accordingly, they form the background material within the second Thessalonian discourse.

Contrasting with the processes in the perfective aspect, there is a process depicted in the imperfective aspect, expressed by προσεύχεσθε. This behavioral process involves the Thessalonian recipients as the behavers, with the senders serving as the purpose or reason for the process. Being foregrounded by its depiction in the imperfective aspect, this process and its agents play a role in constituting the mainline of the discourse. The verb πεποίθαμεν stands out the most prominently due to its depiction in the stative aspect. As a mental process, it positions the senders in the role of senser, while the Thessalonian recipients are cast as phenomenon being portrayed as responding to the senders' commands.

Thus, the ideational focus of this topic-comment unit is conveyed through the layered aspectual distinctions of the processes and participants. In the topic-comment units of 1 Thessalonians, characterized as the senders' intercessory prayer, several distinct lexicogrammatical features are apparent. These include the introduction of divine

figures as thematized elements and the depiction of processes, with divine figures as agents, in the perfective aspect and optative mood-forms. This pattern is similarly observed in the current topic-comment unit of 2 Thessalonians. Consequently, it can be cautiously concluded that such lexicogrammatical patterns are indicative of the senders' semiotic actions as intercessory prayer. Notably, both First and Second Thessalonians demonstrate these features with remarkable consistency. However, the topic-comment unit in 2 Thessalonians, characterized as the senders' intercessory prayer, contains distinctive features that differ from those in 1 Thessalonians. The current intercessory prayer unit showcases the process προσεύχεσθε in the imperfective aspect and πεποίθαμεν in the stative aspect. Consequently, within the framework of the senders' intercessory prayer, two elements are emphasized: the senders' wish for the Thessalonian recipients to act on behalf of the senders, and the senders' confidence in the recipients' adherence to their commands. These elements are distinctly foregrounded and form the focal point of this topic-comment unit.

<div align="center">Interpersonal Meaning</div>

In the intercessory prayer topic-comment units of 1 Thessalonians, the relationship dynamics among the participants are clearly delineated. The senders, embodying the apostolic figures and church founders, are perceived through the lens of an extralinguistically established first-order social role that places them in a higher hierarchical relationship than the Thessalonian recipients. This is manifested intra-linguistically as they pray to God on behalf of the Thessalonian believers, who in turn, are the beneficiaries of the senders' intercessory prayers. At the apex of this hierarchy stand the divine figures: God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The senders' prayers

for the spiritual growth and holiness of the Thessalonian believers hinge entirely on God's will, underscoring the ultimate dependence on divine discretion for their fulfillment. This dependence is grammatically marked by the use of optative mood-form verbs, which encapsulate the semantic feature of projection with an element of contingency.

The same relational dynamics are also delineated in the intercessory prayer topic-comment unit of 2 Thessalonians, featuring common key lexicogrammatical elements and structures. Nevertheless, the semiotic acts of supplication in the current topic-comment unit of 2 Thessalonians are revealed with greater complexity, incorporating additional actions required of the Thessalonian recipients and those undertaken by the senders within the broader framework of these mediatory prayers. Within the broader framework of supplication, the senders communicate with their Thessalonian recipients, requesting their prayers in the imperative mood. Additionally, they convey their internal conviction regarding the Thessalonian recipients' achievements in fulfilling the senders' commands. Through these semiotic actions, the senders elevate the Thessalonian believers from mere recipients of the senders' mediating prayers between God and the Thessalonians to agents who actively pray on behalf of the senders.

Regarding grammatical mood-forms and attitudinal semantics, similar to the intercessory topic-comment units in 1 Thessalonians, the optative mood-forms are exclusively employed in the current topic-comment unit of 2 Thessalonians. Here, the grammatical subjects of the verbs in the optative mood are the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father, while the hearts of the Thessalonian believers serve as the objects.[10] In

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[10] Similar to 1 Thess 3:11, Paul identifies both the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father as the grammatical subjects of the singular verbs παρακαλέσαι and στηρίξαι in 2 Thess 2:16–17. Additionally, in 2

addition to the optative mood-form verbs, this topic-comment unit also incorporates an imperative mood-form and an indicative mood-form verb. Employing the imperative verb προσεύχεσθε, the senders emphatically request the Thessalonians to pray for them. This shift not only underscores the transformation of the Thessalonians' role from mere recipients of the senders' intercessory prayers to active agents of prayer on behalf of the senders but also anticipates their ability and willingness to fulfill this role. Employing the indicative mood-form verb πεποίθαμεν, the senders affirm the Thessalonian recipients' ability, willingness, and potential achievement in fulfilling the commands given to them, presenting these qualities as factual realities from their perspective.

Textual Meaning

Upon initial examination, the semantic continuity and coherence of the senders' semiotic act of intercessory prayer in this topic-comment unit appear disrupted by the introduction of a command for the Thessalonian recipients to pray for them. This is followed by a statement on the Lord's faithfulness and the senders' expression of confidence in the recipients fulfilling their commands.

However, the senders' command for their recipients to pray for them extends an invitation for the recipients to engage in prayer for others, moving beyond merely being

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Thess 2:16, although the grammatical subject encompasses both divine figures, the intensive pronoun αὐτός is singular. I cautiously propose that the true grammatical subject of the singular verbs and the intensive pronoun is primarily the Lord Jesus Christ, with God the Father being invoked alongside to signify Jesus' deity. Meanwhile, the separate acts of God the Father are articulated through the nominalized participles structure (ὁ ἀγαπήσας ἡμᾶς καὶ δοὺς παράκλησιν αἰωνίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα ἀγαθὴν ἐν χάριτι). Moreover, in the subsequent instance of another optative mood-form verb in the singular form in 3:5 (κατευθύναι), only the Lord is presented as its grammatical subject. Thus, the senders' wish, as expressed in the optative mood-form verbs, acknowledges the Lord Jesus as the agent of the projected wishful act. However, by also presenting God the Father as the grammatical subject of the first two optative mood-form verbs, the second Thessalonian text seems to emphasize the deity of Jesus.

the objects of others' prayers. This pattern, in which the senders invite the Thessalonian recipients to emulate their actions by serving others, is evident in 1 Thessalonians. The senders expect the recipients to replicate the acts they have performed towards them, thereby contributing to the edification of the church among fellow believers. Here as well, in alignment with this consistent pattern regarding the envisioned roles of the Thessalonian recipients, the senders expect their recipients to fulfill their needs and accordingly extend an invitation for them to do so.

Also, considering the hierarchical personal relationships established among the senders, the Thessalonian recipients, and the divine figures—the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father, with the divine figures positioned at the apex in the context of intercessory prayer, it is conceivable that the senders view themselves as also being the objects of prayers made by other fellow believers with appeal to the divine will. Despite their roles as apostolic figures and church founders, the senders see themselves as requiring the support of others through prayer. This pattern of intra-linguistic enactment among the primary participants resonates throughout both the First and Second Thessalonian discourses.

Furthermore, several lexicogrammatical elements recurring across thematic units within this topic-comment unit may bolster its semantic continuity and coherence. For instance, the verb στηρίξαι, which denotes the action of the Lord strengthening, appears in thematic unit 1 and reoccurs as στηρίξει in thematic unit 3. The phrase ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας is repeated in thematic units 1 and 4. Additionally, the nominal group ὁ κύριος consistently emerges as a thematized element across the thematic units.

In this topic-comment unit, elements that linguistically stand out include a series of optative mood-form verbs. As the most marked mood-forms, their frequent occurrence within this topic-comment unit frontgrounds it in the semantic landscape of attitude. Additionally, the verb πεποίθαμεν, in its stative aspect, highlights the senders' confidence in the recipients' ability and willingness to fulfill the senders' directives, making this confidence a focal point.

Paul's Exhortations to the Thessalonians Concerning Brothers Who Are Idle (2 Thess 3:6–15)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1

⁶ **Παραγγέλλομεν** δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ <u>στέλλεσθαι</u> ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀδελφοῦ ἀτάκτως <u>περιπατοῦντος</u> καὶ μὴ κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν
    ἣν <u>παρελάβοσαν</u> παρ' ἡμῶν.

⁷ aὐτοὶ γὰρ **οἴδατε** πῶς <u>δεῖ</u> <u>μιμεῖσθαι</u> ἡμᾶς,
    ὅτι οὐκ <u>ἠτακτήσαμεν</u> ἐν ὑμῖν
    ⁸ οὐδὲ δωρεὰν ἄρτον <u>ἐφάγομεν</u> παρά τινος,
    ἀλλ' ἐν κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας <u>ἐργαζόμενοι</u> πρὸς τὸ μὴ <u>ἐπιβαρῆσαί</u> τινα ὑμῶν·
        ⁹ οὐχ ὅτι οὐκ <u>ἔχομεν</u> ἐξουσίαν,
        ἀλλ' ἵνα ἑαυτοὺς τύπον <u>δῶμεν</u> ὑμῖν εἰς τὸ <u>μιμεῖσθαι</u> ἡμᾶς.

    ¹⁰ καὶ γὰρ ὅτε <u>ἦμεν</u> πρὸς ὑμᾶς,
τοῦτο **παρηγγέλλομεν** ὑμῖν,
        ὅτι εἴ τις οὐ <u>θέλει</u> <u>ἐργάζεσθαι</u>
    μηδὲ <u>ἐσθιέτω</u>.

¹¹ **ἀκούομεν** γάρ τινας <u>περιπατοῦντας</u> ἐν ὑμῖν ἀτάκτως, μηδὲν <u>ἐργαζομένους</u> ἀλλὰ <u>περιεργαζομένους</u>·

¹² τοῖς δὲ τοιούτοις **παραγγέλλομεν**

καὶ **παρακαλοῦμεν** ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ
    ἵνα μετὰ ἡσυχίας <u>ἐργαζόμενοι</u> τὸν ἑαυτῶν ἄρτον <u>ἐσθίωσιν</u>.

Thematic Unit 2
¹³ ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, μὴ **ἐγκακήσητε** <u>καλοποιοῦντες</u>.

    ¹⁴ Εἰ δέ τις οὐχ <u>ὑπακούει</u> τῷ λόγῳ ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς,
τοῦτον **σημειοῦσθε**,

μὴ <u>συναναμίγνυσθαι</u> αὐτῷ,
    ἵνα <u>ἐντραπῇ</u>·

¹⁵ καὶ μὴ ὡς ἐχθρὸν **ἡγεῖσθε**,

ἀλλὰ **νουθετεῖτε** ὡς ἀδελφόν.

This topic-comment unit includes two thematic elements: the intensive pronoun αὐτοί, which intensifies the grammatical subject of οἴδατε, which is the Thessalonian recipients, and the second person plural pronoun ὑμεῖς, which also refers to the Thessalonian recipients. Unlike the preceding topic-comment units in the second Thessalonian letter, this one exclusively thematizes the Thessalonian recipients. This thematizing pattern aligns with that of 1 Thessalonians, where such a pattern is frequently observed. Both thematic elements in this topic-comment unit hold prime positions within their respective primary clauses, thereby standing as the most prominently thematized elements in the second Thessalonian letter.

    The process chain that aligns with the grammatical person of the thematic element αὐτοί is οἴδατε. Other process chains, not aligned with the grammatical person of the thematic element αὐτοί but elaborating it through processes with agents different from the thematic element, predominantly feature verbs whose grammatical person is that of the letter senders. These include παραγγέλλομεν (3:6; 3:12) and παρηγγέλλομεν (3:10), ἀκούομεν (3:11), and παρακαλοῦμεν (3:12). From the occurrences of these process chains,

it is evident that the first thematic unit, centered around the theme αὐτοί (an intensively used pronoun for the grammatical person of the verb οἴδατε), primarily progresses through the senders commanding and exhorting the Thessalonian recipients. These commands and exhortations are presented as rhematic process chains, anchored in the Thessalonians' fully knowledgeable state. In other words, the senders' actions of commanding and exhorting are framed within the Thessalonian recipients' complete awareness of the senders' diligent work during their time with the recipients.

Contrary to the first thematic unit, the second thematic unit is distinguished by the congruence of the agents in the process chains with the grammatical subject of the thematic element ὑμεῖς. These include μὴ ἐγκακήσητε (3:13), σημειοῦσθε (3:14), μὴ . . . ἡγεῖσθε (3:15), and νουθετεῖτε (3:15). Except for the negated ἐγκακήσητε, all chains consist of second person plural imperative mood-form verbs, signifying commands or prohibitions. The negated ἐγκακήσητε, formed in the second person negated aorist subjunctive mood and functioning as a prohibition, also elaborates the theme ὑμεῖς, relating the senders' prohibitory action to it.[11]

From the distinct process chain patterns associated with their respective thematic elements, it is evident that the two thematic units are clearly demarcated. The first thematic unit is characterized by process chains for the theme αὐτοί, employing first person plural indicative mood-form verbs. Conversely, the second thematic unit features process chains for the theme ὑμεῖς, utilizing second person plural imperative or negated aorist subjunctive mood-form verbs.

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[11] In discussing the negated aorist subjunctive, Porter elucidates, "In Greek, in the second person the negated aorist subjunctive serves as the prohibition instead of the negated aorist imperative" (*Idioms*, 57).

Ideational Meaning

As examined above, the primary participants in the processes of this topic-comment unit are clearly demarcated according to the thematic units. In the first thematic unit, all processes presented through the primary clauses feature the senders as their primary participants. Conversely, in the second thematic unit, all processes involve the Thessalonian recipients as their primary participants.

In the first thematic unit, the verbs παραγγέλλομεν (used twice), ἀκούομεν, and παρακαλοῦμεν are presented in the imperfective aspect, forming the mainline of the discourse. The verb παρηγγέλλομεν (3:10), in the imperfect tense-form, conveys a sense of remoteness in addition to the imperfective aspect represented by the present tense-form. This verb is used to discuss the senders' directives during their time among the Thessalonian believers. In terms of grounding for the discourse plane, the imperfective aspect verb παραγγέλλομεν in the present tense-form, appearing at 3:6 and 3:12, is more foregrounded than the same verb in the imperfect tense-form παρηγγέλλομεν. Among the three imperfective verbs forming the mainline of the discourse, ἀκούομεν is depicted as a mental process, representing the senders' actual hearing that some among the Thessalonian church members are idle, not working at all. The verbiage of the verbal processes, παραγγέλλομεν and παρακαλοῦμεν, primarily addresses how to manage idle members in the Thessalonian church.

A non-imperfective aspect verb also appears in this thematic unit, presented as οἴδατε, with the Thessalonian recipients as its primary participants. Being in the stative aspect, the οἴδατε verb serves as foregrounded material within the environment in which the majority of imperfective aspect verbs operate. As a mental process, the phenomenon

sensed by the Thessalonian recipients is depicted as the exemplary model the senders demonstrated when they were among the Thessalonian believers, highlighting their diligence in working to earn their bread and not to be a burden to anyone in the church.

Particularly, as previously discussed, the primary participant of the verb οἴδατε is highlighted using an intensive pronoun, thereby serving as a distinct thematic element within the thematic unit where it appears. Centered on this thematized element—the Thessalonian believers and their comprehensive understanding of the senders' demonstration of hard work, and their avoidance of idleness and burdensomeness—all processes denoting the senders' commands and exhortations are articulated. This articulation serves to elaborate or augment the meaning within the thematized element and its related processes. Given the semantic progression conveyed by the patterning of these processes in this thematic unit, all the senders' commands and exhortations in addressing idle brothers and sisters stem from the exemplary model the senders demonstrated. Moreover, these commands and encouragements are conveyed while appealing to the Thessalonian recipients' awareness of the senders' exemplary conduct.

Having conveyed their responses to the issue of idleness among church members, treating the Thessalonian recipients as communicative partners in this matter, the senders then provide further instructions to directly address this concern to the Thessalonians. Depicted in the perfective aspect, the negated verb ἐγκακήσητε serves as setting background material. Guided by the overarching principle of not growing weary in doing good, the Thessalonians receive directives from the senders to perform appropriate actions. These actions, lexicogrammatically expressed as σημειοῦσθε, μὴ ὡς ἐχθρὸν

ἡγεῖσθε, and νουθετεῖτε ὡς ἀδελφόν, are depicted in the imperfective aspect and thus form

the mainline of the discourse.

Interpersonal Meaning

Compared to other topic-comment units in either the first or second Thessalonian letter,

the personal relational dynamic of the current unit is noticeably more authoritative. An

examination of the language reveals that the senders adopt a more authoritative stance

towards their recipients. They primarily issue commands and prohibitions, articulating

them with explicit language. Notably, within a single thematic unit, the senders repeat the

same commanding statement, as evidenced in the first thematic unit where the verb

παραγγέλλομεν appears three times.[12] Furthermore, in a departure from previous patterns,

the senders directly address their commands to those perceived as causing issues within

the church, as seen in τοῖς δὲ τοιούτοις παραγγέλλομεν in 3:12.

The authoritative stance of the senders likely reflects their extralinguistically

established social role, with their frequent issuance of commands or prohibitions serving

as semiotic actions, realized intra-linguistically in the text. Additionally, given that

correcting false behaviors and prohibiting wrongful acts are key responsibilities of

apostolic figures and church leaders, the prevalence of such directives from the senders

directed towards those culpable of wrongdoing is unsurprising. Furthermore, the senders

still regard the Thessalonian recipients as capable of addressing problematic issues in the

church. While in the first thematic unit, the senders themselves issue commands to those

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[12] It is the first instance, spanning both First and Second Thessalonians, where a commanding statement like παραγγέλλομεν in 2 Thess 3:6 occupies the prime slot of the primary clause in which it appears, indicating that the clause's message begins with an act of command.

accused of idleness, in the second thematic unit, they instruct the Thessalonian recipients

on how to handle the issue, providing concrete and specific directives suitable for the

situations they may encounter.

Thus, it is not necessary to interpret the intensive use of commands and

prohibitions as indicative of a transformation in the personal relationship between the

letter senders and recipients into one that is cold, frigid, and impersonal.[13] Rather, the

senders demonstrate their firmness in addressing wrongdoing, particularly idleness and

noncompliance. As they frequently point out, the problem with the idle stems from their

failure to accept the traditions imparted by the senders and to heed their words (3:6;

3:13). Therefore, in tackling the issue of idleness within the church, they implicitly

emphasize adherence to the traditions, or teachings, established by them.

The senders' adamancy and firmness in addressing the issue of idleness are

clearly conveyed through commanding statements such as παραγγέλλομεν,

παρηγγέλλομεν, and παρακαλοῦμεν. Depicted through indicative mood-form verbs, the

second Thessalonian text assertively portrays the senders as being particularly concerned

about idleness and addressing it with resolute determination. Meanwhile, by employing

imperative mood-form verbs, along with the negated aorist subjunctive mood, the senders

invite the Thessalonian recipients to participate in addressing the issue of idleness among

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[13] Furnish argues that the extensive issuance of commands in 2 Thessalonians conveys a tone that is impersonal, formal, and devoid of affection, suggesting an official, perhaps even authoritarian, aspect to the letter. However, he does not establish a theoretical basis for the notion that the issuance of commands or prohibitions inherently indicates a formal, impersonal relationship between communicative participants. Moreover, Furnish seems to overlook the more frequent issuance of commands in 1 Thessalonians, particularly evident in 1 Thess 5:12–22. Ironically, he characterizes the tone of 1 Thessalonians as personal and deeply affective. See Furnish, *1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians*, 127–29.

church members. This approach reflects the senders' expectation that the Thessalonian recipients are capable and willing to undertake this responsibility.

Therefore, although this topic-comment unit exhibits a more commanding tone compared to others in both First and Second Thessalonians, the senders' firm and resolute stance is specifically aimed at the idle members, not the entire Thessalonian church congregation. In addressing this issue, the senders continue to encourage the Thessalonian believers to collaborate with them in developing strategies for improvement and fostering a sense of shared responsibility within the church.

Textual Meaning

At first glance, there seems to be no explicit semantic continuity between thematic units 1 and 2 within this topic-comment unit, as the latter lacks explicit repetitions or lexicogrammatical parallels to the former. Additionally, the use of the nominative of address ἀδελφοί might suggest the beginning of a new topic-comment unit. However, several subtly observable concepts and lexicogrammatical elements indicate semantic coherence and continuity between these two thematic units.

First, a key characteristic of the idle members, as highlighted by the senders, is their failure to adhere to the tradition passed on by them, as outlined in 3:6 (μὴ κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν ἣν παρελάβοσαν παρ' ἡμῶν). This idea parallels the guidance given to the Thessalonian recipients in 3:14, which advises avoiding association with those who do not follow the instructions in the senders' letter (εἰ δέ τις οὐχ ὑπακούει τῷ λόγῳ ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς). Therefore, the individual referred to as τις in 3:14 is likely those the senders identify as idle members.

Second, given the semantic link of the indefinite pronoun τις in thematic unit 2 to those identified as idle in thematic unit 1, it can be inferred that the objects of the imperative mood-form verbs ἡγεῖσθε, used with the negated particle μή, and νουθετεῖτε in 2 Thess 3:15 are the idle members, whom the Thessalonian believers are instructed to address. While the grammatical objects are not explicitly stated, they can be elliptically deduced, thereby establishing cohesiveness within the current topic-comment unit. Interestingly, beyond the second Thessalonian letter, in 1 Thess 5:14, the verb νουθετεῖτε appears in the imperative mood, targeting the idle (τοὺς ἀτάκτους) as the action's object. The same verb, also in the imperative, is found in 2 Thess 3:15. Although the object of the directive action is not explicitly stated there, the parallelism with 1 Thess 5:14 suggests that the object of the directive in 2 Thess 3:15 is similarly the idle (τοὺς ἀτάκτους). This consistent treatment indicates that the issue of idleness in the Thessalonian church is tackled across both thematic units within the current topic-comment unit.

In the linguistic highlighting of this topic-comment unit, the οἴδατε verb in the stative aspect stands out as the most prominent element, acting as foreground material amidst the prevalent and consistent imperfective aspect verbs. Moreover, the intensive pronoun, reinforcing the grammatical subject of οἴδατε, along with its thematized position, establishes it as the most linguistically significant element within the unit. Semantically, the senders' commands and encouragements addressing idleness draw on the Thessalonian recipients' awareness of the senders' diligent work ethic, their avoidance of idleness and burden while among the Thessalonians. This shared

understanding enables the recipients to easily accept and respect the senders' commands and exhortations, rooted in their direct experience.

Paul's Intercessory Prayer for the Thessalonians (2 Thess 3:16)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1
¹⁶ Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος τῆς εἰρήνης **δῴη** ὑμῖν τὴν εἰρήνην διὰ παντὸς ἐν παντὶ τρόπῳ.

Thematic Unit 2
ὁ κύριος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

In this topic-comment unit, two nominal word groups are identified as thematic elements: αὐτός . . . ὁ κύριος τῆς εἰρήνης and ὁ κύριος, resulting in two distinct thematic units. Within the current topic-comment unit, the same participants are presented as thematized elements. The first occurrence, αὐτός . . . ὁ κύριος τῆς εἰρήνης, stands out more prominently due to its connection with the intensive pronoun αὐτός and its complex, elaborated rhematic elements. Furthermore, the alignment of a process chain's grammatical subject with the thematized element enhances the thematic element's significance.

As the divine figure—here, the Lord, who is conceivably Jesus Christ, given the consistent collocational use of ὁ κύριος with ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός across both Thessalonian texts—is presented as a thematic element, this topic-comment unit can potentially be identified as the senders' intercessory prayer unit. Consequently, as observed in other intercessory prayer topic-comment units in First and Second Thessalonians, it is likely that this unit also serves a transitional function in a structural capacity, leading to another major semantic unit.

Ideational Meaning

As typically observed in intercessory prayer topic-comment units in both First and Second Thessalonians, the material process type, featuring a divine figure as the primary participant, also characterizes the presented process here. The divine figures' actions and their consequential influences on the letter's primary participants, including the senders and the Thessalonian recipients, have defined the intercessory unit in both letters. In this instance, the action of the Lord Jesus Christ in granting something to the Thessalonian recipients, along with its potential envisioned outcomes, becomes the ideational focus of this topic-comment unit.

Interpersonal Meaning

In line with the typical characteristics of intercessory prayer topic-comment units in both the first and second letters to the Thessalonians, the verb δῴη is also used here in the optative mood. This choice of mood indicates the senders' wish for the Lord to act on behalf of their recipients, acknowledging that the outcome is entirely subject to the Lord's will. Additionally, within the interpersonal dynamics of the letter, the divine figure holds the highest position, with the senders acting as intermediaries between the Lord and their Thessalonian recipients.

Textual Meaning

The most notable linguistic feature in this topic-comment unit is that the same participants are consistently presented as thematic elements. Furthermore, unlike other intercessory prayer topic-comment units in both First and Second Thessalonians, here the Lord alone appears as the divine figure to whom the senders direct their supplications for

their Thessalonian recipients. In an earlier intercessory prayer unit in 2 Thessalonians, the Lord (ὁ κύριος) also appears more prominently than other divine figures, such as God the Father. Additionally, it was observed that the predicates in the first thematic unit are singular in number. I proposed that these singular verbs align only with the Lord as the grammatical subject, and not with God the Father, even though both are presented together. From these observations, it can be cautiously inferred that the second Thessalonian text places greater emphasis on the role and actions of the Lord Jesus Christ in relation to the current situation of the Thessalonian recipients. This situation, marked by ongoing persecution and suffering even after the missionaries' expulsion from Thessalonica, underlines the senders' deep concern for the Thessalonians enduring these trials. Given this need, the senders might have invoked the Lord Jesus Christ more frequently in the second Thessalonian letter, who experienced suffering and death but triumphed over his persecutors, rising again and bestowing glory upon those who endured persecution.

Paul's Final Greetings to the Thessalonians (2 Thess 3:17–18)

Thematization

Thematic Unit 1
[17] Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου,
 ὅ ἐστιν σημεῖον ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ·

οὕτως γράφω.

Thematic Unit 2
[18] ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

Two nominal word groups, ὁ ἀσπασμός and ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, are identified as thematic elements, from which two thematic units arise. Both of these thematized elements occupy prime positions, serving as the initial focus and starting point for the message that each of their respective clauses conveys. This leads to them standing as frontgrounded elements in terms of thematic emphasis and positioning.

The meaning of the theme in the first thematic unit, ὁ ἀσπασμός, is further developed through the following rhematic elements, which consist of three distinct grammatical structures: (1) a nominal word group complex in the instrumental dative, τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου, specifying the greeting (ὁ ἀσπασμός) by denoting that it is personally conveyed by the hand of Paul; (2) a subordinate clause initiated by a relative pronoun, ὅ ἐστιν σημεῖον ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ, further specifying that this greeting is a mark in every one of his letters; (3) an inferential independent clause with γράφω as its predicate, signalling Paul's semiotic action to enact such a greeting by writing with his hand on this letter.

The act of greeting, as delineated by Paul in the first thematic unit, is semiotically actualized in the second thematic unit through the formulation ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. Reflecting on the portrayal of the greeting in the initial thematic unit, the phrase ἡ χάρις . . . πάντων ὑμῶν emerges as a signature of Paul's personal salutation, penned directly by his hand. This act exemplifies his dedication to nurturing relational ties with his audience, embodying a distinctive feature recurrent in his letters.

The thematic organization within this topic-comment unit implies its intention to culminate the letter with the act of salutation. Additionally, by elaborating on the

characteristics of the greeting, it highlights Paul's approach to interacting with the Thessalonian recipients, performed in a markedly personal and direct manner.

Ideational Meaning

From the occurrences of thematic elements expressed in ὁ ἀσπασμός and ἡ χάρις . . . πάντων ὑμῶν, it is observed that the ideational thrust of this topic-comment unit centers on construing the greeting as articulated within the text and actualizing it in concrete expression. To realize such experiential features in linguistic form, three complex clause structures are employed: two are verbless clauses, and one contains the finite verb γράφω as its predicate.

One of the verbless clauses, though the process is not explicitly stated, implicitly suggests that the clause complex ὁ ἀσπασμός . . . ἐπιστολῇ is an instance of a relational process, construing the thematized entity ὁ ἀσπασμός as the carrier and the following circumstantial elements as the attribute, attributing to the carrier the distinctive quality of being personally conveyed by Paul, as signified in τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου, and universally recognized across his letters through ὅ ἐστιν σημεῖον ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ.[14]

As the sole finite verb in the primary clause within this topic-comment unit, the verb γράφω denotes a material process with Paul as the actor—the primary participant

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[14] The use of the neuter relative pronoun ὅ in this clause complex does not adhere strictly to the grammatical gender of the preceding noun ὁ ἀσπασμός, which is masculine. Instead, its employment here is indicative of a broader grammatical principle in ancient Greek, where neuter pronouns are often utilized to refer to an entire clause or idea, rather than a specific antecedent with matching gender. This usage allows for a more inclusive reference, encompassing the full scope of the action or concept described, rather than being limited to a singular, gendered noun. In this regard, Porter notes: "In instances where the relative pronoun is referring to an extended phrase rather than to a particular word or a group of words, or where a group of items is referred to as a whole, the neuter pronoun is often used" (*Idioms*, 249). This explanation underscores the neuter pronoun's function in encompassing the entire conceptual gesture of the greeting as personally conveyed by Paul, identified as a characteristic mark in all his letters.

who directly engages in the act of writing. Significantly, the verb γράφω functions

independently, without any complementary grammatical components such as the action's

objects. From the perspective of the transitivity network, the clause featuring the verb

γράφω as its process lacks explicit information about the content written or the recipient.

Only the agent and the process are present, omitting the goal, which is typically realized

in the accusative case, and the recipient, often expressed in the dative case.

Nonetheless, within the extended semantic framework of this topic-comment unit,

the act of writing is intricately linked to the two thematized elements: ὁ ἀσπασμός and ἡ

χάρις . . . ὑμῶν. Given the strategic positioning of these elements, the verb γράφω

semantically bridges ὁ ἀσπασμός and ἡ χάρις . . . ὑμῶν, underscoring Paul's intent to pen

the greeting. Specifically, this indicates that the greeting Paul intends to write is

personally inscribed by his hand, a characteristic consistently evident in every one of his

letters, with ἡ χάρις . . . ὑμῶν serving as its linguistic realization. Consequently, while the

clause with γράφω may not directly specify the goals or recipients of the process, the

larger semantic framework implies that ὁ ἀσπασμός represents the intended content, with

ἡ χάρις . . . ὑμῶν serving as the linguistically realized greeting. The material process here

is fundamental, as it conveys the physical act of writing, which in turn actualizes the

greeting, making it a personal act of communication from Paul to his recipients.[15]

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[15] E. Randolph Richards notes that in the ancient world, the use of amanuenses or scribes for composing both public and private documents was a common practice. Richards, *Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, 173. It is evident that Paul, following the customs of his contemporaries, utilized the services of a scribe. This is exemplified in Rom 16:22, where the scribe, Tertius, includes his own greetings to the believers in Rome. Building on this understanding, Weima contends that the phrase τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου, found in 2 Thess 3:17, suggests Paul had previously employed a secretary for the letter's composition before personally concluding it with his own handwriting. Weima, "Sincerely, Paul," 337. Considering these insights, this study posits that the explicitly realized greeting, ἡ χάρις . . . ὑμῶν in 2 Thess 3:18, likely marks the juncture at which Paul took up the pen to write personally.

As previously discussed in Chapter 2, viewing 2 Thess 3:17 as a definitive mark of authentication through Paul's handwriting introduces a problematic aspect to the longstanding debate over the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians. For proponents of the pseudonymous authorship of 2 Thessalonians, Paul's handwriting remark is viewed as an overstated claim to authorship. This perception suggests a hypothesized historical scenario in which the alleged pseudonymous author might be overcompensating, aiming to reinforce Pauline authenticity to present 2 Thessalonians as a genuine letter from Paul. This issue becomes more pronounced for critics due to the notable absence of this handwriting feature in 1 Thessalonians, despite 2 Thess 3:17's explicit assertion that including a purported handwritten autograph characterizes all of Paul's letters.

In contrast, the analytical results from the transitivity network and thematic organization suggest that this topic-comment unit's primary concern is not the linguistic realization of verifying Pauline authorship of the letter. By employing the imperfective aspect verb γράφω, the Thessalonian text foregrounds the act of writing. This foregrounded action, integral in crafting the final greeting in his customary manner, is encapsulated in the phrase ἡ χάρις . . . ὑμῶν. From this analytical standpoint, the statement ὅ ἐστιν σημεῖον ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ is understood to reference the greeting (ὁ ἀσπασμός), distinctively penned by Paul's hand (τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου), as a feature present in all his letters. Concurrently, the nominal word group ἡ χάρις . . . ὑμῶν is revealed as the linguistic embodiment of the greeting delineated in 3:17, crafted by Paul. Given the semantic implications of this topic-comment unit, it may be posited that the phrase ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ—or its variations—would consistently feature in all of Paul's letters, as implied by ὅ ἐστιν σημεῖον ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ. Indeed, each Pauline

letter in the New Testament, irrespective of its classification within the debate over

Pauline authorship as disputed or undisputed, includes a similar closing greeting, starting

with ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου or slight variations thereof. The salutation in 1 Thessalonians

closely mirrors that in 2 Thessalonians, suggesting that Paul authored the final greeting in

1 Thessalonians as well, despite the absence of a comment akin to 2 Thess 3:17.

Therefore, the reference to Paul's handwritten salutation does not solely serve as an

authenticating mark of authorship. Instead, it highlights Paul's customary approach to

concluding his letters, emphasizing the personal touch in his salutations.

<p style="text-align:center">Interpersonal Meaning</p>

The most notable linguistic feature of this topic-comment unit, with regard to

interpersonal meaning, is the emergence of a participant expressed in the first person

singular. Paul is presented here as the sole authorial figure engaging with the

Thessalonian recipients, grammatically signified by his proper name, Παύλου, and in the

first person singular verb form, γράφω, underscoring his direct involvement as the agent.

The emphasis on the personal act of writing uniquely attributed to Paul effectively

excludes any co-senders from the act of physically writing the greeting's formulation.

However, this specific mention of Paul's exclusivity in the act of salutation does not

necessarily imply that Silas and Timothy are excluded from the salutatory act itself

towards their recipients. Instead, the Thessalonian text merely conveys that it is Paul who

personally penned the final greeting expressed in ἡ χάρις . . . ὑμῶν with his own hand.

Given that Silas and Timothy, along with Paul, are presented as agents of the greeting at

the opening of the letter, it is plausible they too were involved in the conceptualization of

the final greeting. Here, the focus is solely on Paul's act of writing the greeting as if acting on behalf of, or representing, the collective sender group, foregrounding his physical role in conveying the greeting while not diminishing the collective intention behind it.

From the exclusive presentation of Paul in interactional exchanges with the Thessalonian recipients within this topic-comment unit, characterized by the final greeting, it can be inferred that Paul holds the highest hierarchical position among the senders of this letter. This suggests that Paul acts as a representative figure among the senders, specifically in conducting interactional exchanges and particularly in finalizing discourse engagements. Just like in 1 Thessalonians, the final stage of the second Thessalonian discourse is predominantly shaped by Paul's direct involvement. Despite differences in the process types and the roles of secondary participants (ἐνορκίζω ὑμᾶς in 1 Thess 5:27; γράφω in 2 Thess 3:17), Paul consistently serves as the primary agent in the concluding parts of both Thessalonian discourses.

Textual Meaning

As outlined above, the semantic flow of this topic-comment unit progresses from introducing the greeting and detailing its handwriting characteristics as a sign of all Paul's letters, to assertively indicating that Paul is the one writing the described greeting, culminating in the actual inscription of the greeting in the form of ἡ χάρις . . . ὑμῶν. In facilitating the semantic coherence and unity, some cohesive devices are used. The relative pronoun ὅ in 3:17 anaphorically references the complete gesture of the greeting (ὁ ἀσπασμός) personally conveyed by Paul's hand (τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου), while

simultaneously providing further description of this greeting as a signature feature across all of Paul's letters. The adverb οὕτως functions to grammatically and semantically link Paul's customary greeting practice with his action of writing, serving both anaphorically to refer back to the described method and cataphorically to anticipate the demonstration of this method in what follows. It underscores the manner in which Paul writes, indicating that the action of writing (γράφω) is performed in the same way as described in the preceding clause complex, thereby creating cohesion by illustrating the consistent method Paul employs across his letters.

The most linguistically prominent items within this topic-comment unit are the two thematized elements, ὁ ἀσπασμός and ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, each strategically positioned in prime slots within their respective clauses. Among these two thematized elements, ὁ ἀσπασμός is much more elaborated upon with rhematic elements in terms of volume and complexity than ἡ χάρις . . . Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The occurrences of the proper name for Paul in the first person singular, along with the process chain γράφω, are prominent in their own right within this topic-comment unit. This prominence is observed in the participant structures of this letter, where the first person plural predominantly references the letter's authors, and the verbal aspectual usage, indicating the imperfective aspect, thereby serves as crucial foregrounding material. These prominent items function as rhematic elements, expanding the meaning of the theme ὁ ἀσπασμός. Consequently, the nominal word group ὁ ἀσπασμός emerges as the most linguistically significant element within this discourse.

Considering the linguistic analysis of this text across various metafunctional dimensions, the topic of this semantic unit is identified as the final greeting to the

Thessalonians. The elements functioning as comment elaborate on the nature of this greeting: its crafting by Paul's hand, the uniformity demonstrated across all of Paul's letters, its importance as a semiotic act of writing, and its articulation through ἡ χάρις . . . Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Metafunctional and Situational Features of the Language of 2 Thessalonians

The analysis of thematization in the second Thessalonian letter reveals that conceptual ideas or their associated participants are often highlighted as thematic elements. In contrast to the first Thessalonian letter, where the Thessalonian recipients, followed by the authorial figures, are the most frequently occurring thematic entities, 2 Thessalonians shifts its focus to abstract entities and figures such as ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, τις, τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ κατέχων, and ὁ ἄνομος. The rhemes linked to these thematic elements primarily function to offer definitions or explanations of their attributes and characteristics. Notably, these thematic elements are densely concentrated within topic-comment units addressing eschatological events. These units address the challenges of enduring suffering and persecutions, particularly in the letter's initial topic-comment unit, and emphasize the importance of guarding against false claims about the day of the Lord, in the second topic-comment unit.

Following the abstract or conceptual entities related to eschatological events, divine figures become the most frequently thematized participants in 2 Thessalonians. Remarkably, the Lord (ὁ κύριος) exhibits a more significant presence than other divine figures, except in instances like 2:16, where he is mentioned alongside God the Father. Even then, the process chain and its grammatical participant are closely tied to the Lord

Jesus Christ. The rhemes connected to the theme ὁ κύριος primarily serve to detail the thematized entity in relation to the senders' hopes for the Lord's intervention on behalf of their Thessalonian recipients. Therefore, the portrayal of the Lord as a thematized element uniquely appears in the topic-comment units characterized by the senders' intercessory prayers. Regarding the more frequent thematization of the Lord compared to other divine figures in the intercessory prayer topic-comment units, I have discussed that this emphasis likely stems from his experiences of suffering, death, victory over persecutors, resurrection, and the bestowal of glory upon those enduring persecution. These aspects may closely correspond with the context of situation the second Thessalonian text constructs, wherein the senders specifically address the Thessalonians' ongoing persecutions and sufferings, which persist even after Paul and his co-missionary workers were expelled and remain absent from the Thessalonians.

While the Thessalonian recipients are presented as thematic elements throughout the first Thessalonian text, in the second Thessalonian letter, they are depicted as such exclusively within the topic-comment unit addressing idleness. Rather than thematizing those accountable for idleness, the second Thessalonian text foregrounds the Thessalonian recipients, underscoring the necessity of confronting idleness informed by the Thessalonians' comprehension of the senders' model conduct and their expected proactive measures. This approach potentially highlights the community's duty to initiate action, implying that the senders advocate for the Thessalonians to extend pastoral care to their peers, reflecting the senders' dedication towards them.

The analysis of the lexicogrammatical elements and structures conveying the ideational meaning of the second Thessalonian letter reveals that its discourse depicts the

senders as deeply grateful for the Thessalonian believers and steadfast in their pastoral duties and care, despite their ongoing physical separation from them. Similar to the first Thessalonian letter, the senders express their gratitude through mental processes. However, in 2 Thessalonians, the depth of gratitude is further accentuated by an internal compulsion or obligation to give thanks. This profound sentiment is grammatically presented through the use of the verb ὀφείλομεν, coupled with the rank-shifted infinitive clause εὐχαριστεῖν as its object. This configuration hints at a nuanced interplay between cognitive recognition of duty and an emotional response of gratitude, indicating a complex layering of cognitive and emotive depth. This verbal structure sheds light on the situational context in which the senders feel a compelled acknowledgment of their gratitude, arising from the Thessalonians' unceasing sufferings from persecutions amid the senders' absence, while also acknowledging their endurance and the remarkable growth and increase in their faith and love. The depiction of the senders as continuing their pastoral work and attention for the Thessalonians is primarily conveyed through verbal processes, similar to 1 Thessalonians. These verbal processes include a preemptive utterance to forestall any false claims about the day of the Lord (ἐρωτῶμεν in 2:1) and an exhortative utterance aimed at addressing the issue of idle members within the church (παραγγέλλομεν in 3:6). As with 1 Thessalonians, all the aforementioned mental and verbal processes make up the mainline of the second Thessalonian letter, articulated in the imperfective aspect.

Regarding interpersonal meanings, the language of the second Thessalonian letter consistently conveys a positive evaluative stance of the senders towards their Thessalonian recipients. As previously illustrated, the senders construe the Thessalonians

as individuals who grow and increase in their faith and love, even amid ongoing persecutions exerted upon them and during the separation from their church founders and leaders. Considering the Thessalonian believers currently facing these afflictions, the senders portray themselves as deeply grateful to God for the Thessalonians and consistently offering prayers on behalf of the Thessalonian believers.

Also, given the Thessalonians' current circumstance of navigating the absence of their church leaders with uncertainty about their return, the senders anticipate a potential scenario where the Thessalonians might face a false claim disseminated through any possible medium by someone asserting that the day of the Lord has already arrived. Here, by appealing to the Thessalonian believers' well-informed state regarding the eschatological events they had been taught, and highlighting this through the use of the verb οἴδατε in the stative aspect, the senders emphasize the Thessalonians' ability to remain undeceived by such false claims, as indicated by the use of ἐξαπατήσῃ in the subjunctive mood. As a result, the senders envision the Thessalonians as standing firm and adhering to the traditions imparted to them.

Moreover, in addressing the issue of idleness in the church, the senders once again appeal to the Thessalonians' comprehensive understanding of the hard work they exemplified during their time with the Thessalonians, employing the verb οἴδατε in the stative aspect. This understanding establishes the basis for the senders to issue pertinent commands to the individuals implicated in idleness. In the interpersonal dynamics conveyed by the senders, their directives target these specific individuals rather than the Thessalonian believers collectively or in broad strokes. Instead, the senders invite the Thessalonian believers to confront these idle members by issuing relevant commands in

the imperative mood-forms for dealing with this issue, reflecting a form of pastoral care and attention akin to what the senders have extended towards the Thessalonian community. Consequently, from the senders' perspective, the Thessalonian believers are regarded to be proactive defenders in preempting false claims by relying on their knowledge. They are also seen as pastoral partners in addressing the issue of idle members, all of which is navigated by the Thessalonian believers during the absence of their church founders and leaders.

Regarding the textual meanings within the second Thessalonian letter, its textual structure exhibits a coherent semantic progression that closely mirrors that of the first Thessalonian letter. This progression initiates with the affirmation and further strengthening of the bond between the senders and the recipients. It includes a necessary expression of gratitude, along with its underlying reasons, focusing on the Thessalonians' growth and increase in faith and love amidst enduring afflictions. Additionally, it elaborates on the purpose of the afflictions the Thessalonians face. Subsequently, the Thessalonian text advances to guide the Thessalonians in response to a potential situation where a false claim regarding the day of the Lord could be propagated within the church. It transitions to offering an exhortation for the Thessalonians on managing idle members within the congregation. The letter culminates with a concluding salutation, uniquely authored by Paul himself. Similar to 1 Thessalonians, two intercessory prayers from the senders are strategically placed among the primary semantic units. The first prayer is situated between the segments addressing the senders' instructions on a false claim regarding the Day of the Lord and the exhortation concerning idleness, while the second is positioned between the segments on the exhortation about idleness and the concluding

greeting. Therefore, akin to 1 Thessalonians, the intercessory prayer units in 2 Thessalonians serve as transitional elements that seamlessly connect the primary semantic units.

Concerning linguistic highlighting featured in 2 Thessalonians, the most prominent linguistic elements are heavily utilized in portraying the Thessalonian recipients. In addressing the two principal concerns of 2 Thessalonians—guidance on the day of the Lord and advice regarding idleness—the senders present the Thessalonian recipients as being in a well-informed state about these issues. This is accomplished by employing the same stative aspect verb (οἴδατε) to articulate their condition: the Thessalonians are depicted as possessing a profound comprehension of eschatological events (2:6) and as being keenly cognizant of the senders' hard work and diligence throughout their stay in Thessalonica (3:7).[16] Leveraging the Thessalonians' profound knowledge, the senders tailor their discourse to not only resonate with the recipients' existing insights but also introduce new discussions aimed at expanding their understanding of the issues at hand. Additionally, other instances of stative aspect verbs are used to underscore the Thessalonians' esteemed status from the senders' perspective. Where the Thessalonians are portrayed as beloved by the Lord, the stative aspect verb (ἠγαπημένοι) is employed in 2:13. Likewise, when expressing their confidence in the Thessalonians' compliance with their directives, the senders use another stative aspect verb (πεποίθαμεν) in 3:4. Echoing the approach of 1 Thessalonians, the second

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[16] In the occurrence of οἴδατε in 3:7, the use of an intensive pronoun (αὐτοί) accentuates the predicate's grammatical subject, thereby further intensifying the emphasis on the Thessalonians' acute awareness of the senders' efforts and diligence.

Thessalonian text similarly utilizes numerous marked linguistic elements to construe the Thessalonian recipients as highly esteemed from the senders' perspective.

Reflecting on the linguistic attributes of 2 Thessalonians thus far, it is apparent that the text constructs a context in which the senders engage in ongoing pastoral activities. Such activities include reinforcing relationships with their recipients, particularly by reassuring them of their steadfastness amidst persecutions and sufferings, preventing the possible dissemination of false claims, and addressing issues related to idle church members. Referencing the senders' recollections of their time in Thessalonica (οὐκ ἠτακτήσαμεν ἐν ὑμῖν in 3:7; ὅτε ἦμεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς in 3:10) and their reports on hearing about idle members among the Thessalonian believers (ἀκούομεν in 3:11), we can deduce that the senders are not presently with the Thessalonians. Given the references to a previous letter in 2 Thessalonians (2:15; 3:17), it is plausible that the current second Thessalonian letter was sent following the one mentioned within, with 1 Thessalonians being the most likely referenced correspondence. The rationale for identifying the letter referenced in 2 Thessalonians lies in the description of the letter mentioned in 2:15, which is suggested to contain eschatological teachings imparted by Paul. Similarly, 1 Thessalonians is known for its detailed exposition of eschatological teachings. Moreover, the reference to a letter in 3:17, characterized by a final greeting penned by Paul, aligns with the concluding salutation found in 1 Thessalonians. If 2 Thessalonians follows 1 Thessalonians, as suggested, a likely circumstantial continuity arises, central to 2 Thessalonians' concerns: the senders remain absent from their Thessalonian recipients, who continue to endure sufferings due to persecutions. Thus, the second Thessalonian text linguistically constructs this overarching circumstantial environment as follows: It

construes the Thessalonian believers growing and increasing in faith and love despite

ongoing persecutions and the absence of their church founders and leaders. Additionally,

the text anticipates the possibility of false claims regarding the day of the Lord arising

during the founders' absence but expects the Thessalonians to preempt such

misinformation. Moreover, it encourages the Thessalonian believers to address the issue

of idle members within their church, emulating the pastoral care previously extended to

them by the senders.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In this study, I have explored the linguistic meanings of First and Second Thessalonians, categorizing them into three metafunctional dimensions of language, and defined the context of situation that each Thessalonian text linguistically construes, with a purpose to evaluate the major arguments presented for and against the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians in its textual relationship with 1 Thessalonians.

To discuss the results from this study's linguistic analysis of First and Second Thessalonians, it would be advisable first to address the most general descriptions of the context of situation each Thessalonian letter conveys through linguistic means. This approach will facilitate understanding the specific register instantiated by each letter. This is because it would be a critical indicator to determine whether there are significant contradictions between the contexts of situation the Thessalonian texts linguistically construe, as argued by critics in favor of pseudonymous authorship of 2 Thessalonians, as well as by proponents of its Pauline authorship. In light of these general descriptions of the registers instantiated within the Thessalonian texts, and the contexts of situation they represent, a subsequent evaluation of the specific arguments referenced in the authorship debate for 2 Thessalonians in relation to 1 Thessalonians then ensues.

Regarding the type of register and the context of situation it linguistically represents, this study confirms that both Thessalonian texts consistently construct the same context of situation. In the ideational dimension of language used in both texts, they

uniformly realize situations wherein Paul, along with his co-senders, Silas and Timothy, engage in ongoing pastoral care and attention towards the believers in Thessalonica following their forced departure from the city. In circumstances where revisiting the church is not feasible, the senders construe themselves as maintaining communication through the mode of letter writing. Through the letters, they affirm and further strengthen the established personal relationship with the Thessalonian believers, using linguistic expressions to convey their profound gratitude for the Thessalonian recipients. They reminisce about positive experiences they have in common, including sharing the gospel, providing mutual encouragement, engaging in collaborative efforts, and enduring hardships together. Additionally, through the letters, they offer teachings and exhortations that serve as alternatives to the guidance they cannot provide in person, due to their current inability to access the Thessalonian church. All the teachings and exhortations in both letters consistently aim to encourage the Thessalonian recipients to further grow in faith and knowledge, live their lives according to God's calling, and strengthen their church by supporting fellow believers, despite the ongoing absence of their church founders and leaders.

In the interpersonal dimension of language utilized in both texts, they foster a highly positive personal relationship between the senders and their Thessalonian recipients. The senders consistently express gratitude for their recipients and mention their unceasing prayers on their behalf. Notably, they adopt a highly positive evaluative stance towards their recipients, commending them for their comprehensive understanding of the teachings and their commendable conduct in alignment with the senders' expectations. Furthermore, in both letters, the senders invite the Thessalonians to

undertake the role of pastoral care and attention for their fellow church members, emulating the care the senders themselves have provided, especially in situations where they cannot be present in person. This invitation is also conveyed through the senders requesting the Thessalonian believers to pray for them, positioning the Thessalonians not just as recipients of the senders' prayers but as active participants in mutual prayer.

In the textual dimension of language, both Thessalonian texts exhibit nearly identical textual structures, demonstrating a common organizational flow constituting a cohesive semantic unit. They commence with the senders' commitment to maintaining and strengthening relational ties with the Thessalonian believers, followed by addressing key issues deemed crucial for the Thessalonian church. This leads to exhortative or paraenetic directives aimed at encouraging appropriate behaviors and adherence to their teachings, concluding with a final greeting and additional comments. Interestingly, both texts incorporate intercessory prayer remarks between major semantic units, serving structurally as transitions from one unit to another.

Drawing from the linguistic features identified through metafunctional analysis in First and Second Thessalonians, it is apt to describe the register of these texts as benevolent correspondence between parties physically distanced from each other. To more delicately characterize the specific register each Thessalonian text linguistically instantiates, this type of communication typically embodies consistent pastoral care and attention by the church's founders and leaders towards their Christian readers, despite physical separation. This separation, a result of the forced expulsion of church leaders by authorities and the ensuing persecutions encountered by both parties, further defines the field of discourse. In terms of tenor, the exchanges originate from church founders and

leaders of higher rank directed to their readers of lesser rank, showcasing their teachings, exhortations, and commandments. However, the authors do not entirely adopt an authoritative stance; instead, they engage the readers in mutual pastoral care and invite active participation in reciprocal prayer. Ultimately, the authors position themselves alongside the readers, jointly under the ultimate authority of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The mode of the discourse, primarily conveyed through written letters, is characterized by an organized flow, beginning with the authors nurturing and reinforcing a positive personal connection with the readers, then addressing the pressing concerns and situational needs, delivering practical exhortations, and culminating in a manner consistent with the authors' established practices.

Within the constrained semantic and structural potentials this type of register offers, the two Thessalonian texts realize their own specific situational contexts. As discussed, both Thessalonian texts reveal overarching semantic and structural features common to both, reflecting their construction within identical types of situational contexts. The only differences stem from the specific contexts each text realizes, shaped by the unique circumstances they address. For instance, 1 Thessalonians emerges from the immediate need to communicate following the separation of the senders from the recipients. Conversely, 2 Thessalonians pertains to subsequent communication, occurring after a period has elapsed since the first letter's delivery. This distinction highlights the nuanced contextual responses encapsulated within each text. However, what is consistently maintained across the two Thessalonian letters is the ideational dimension concerning continued pastoral concern and care from the senders to their recipients. Similarly, the interpersonal dimension regarding personal relations between the senders

and recipients, as well as the textual dimension in structuring and organizing such ideational and interpersonal meanings, remains unchanged between the writings of the two letters.

Given the general descriptions of the register shared by First and Second Thessalonians, as well as the context of situation they linguistically embody, this study's analysis is crucial in evaluating the arguments supporting the pseudonymous authorship of 2 Thessalonians compared to 1 Thessalonians. Building upon the general linguistic features and contextual descriptions of the Thessalonian texts, this study critically scrutinizes specific textual elements that critics have often cited as evidence questioning Pauline authorship. It particularly addresses alleged textual issues such as differences in the eschatological perspective on the timing of the parousia, variations in tone and personal relationship, literary similarities, and the use of a verification mark in the second letter.

Referring to the seemingly differing eschatological viewpoints—specifically, the portrayal of the parousia as imminent in 1 Thessalonians versus delayed in 2 Thessalonians—critics who regard 1 Thessalonians as an authentic Pauline letter argue for the pseudonymous authorship of 2 Thessalonians, attributing these differences to distinct authors. In response to this argument, proponents of Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians suggest that the variations in eschatological perspectives result from changes in Paul's circumstances between the composition of 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians. However, this study responds to this argument by suggesting that the language of both the First and Second Thessalonian texts does not focus on construing the subject of the parousia as either imminent or delayed. Instead, both texts present the

parousia to the Thessalonian recipients within a situational context that necessitates the Thessalonians to strengthen the church body and protect against any false claims, despite the senders' absence. In 1 Thessalonians, the senders urge their recipients to support one another, particularly in the face of members' deaths, with the hope of resurrection at Christ's return. They are also encouraged to adopt a lifestyle of vigilance and sobriety in anticipation of the second coming of Christ. This encouragement highlights the call to support fellow church members, effectively assuming the role of pastoral care and attention in place of the senders, who are not currently among the Thessalonians. In 2 Thessalonians, the senders instruct the Thessalonian believers not to be deceived or led astray by any potential false claims regarding the day of the Lord, communicated through any means, especially during the senders' absence. To preempt such a scenario, the Thessalonians are instructed to stand firm and adhere to the teachings previously imparted by the senders. Therefore, claiming the pseudonymous authorship of 2 Thessalonians by pointing out differences in eschatological timing regarding the parousia does not constitute a reasonable argument from the outset.

Referring to the alleged difference in tone and evaluative stance of the senders towards the Thessalonian recipients—specifically, the warm and affectionate, positive evaluation in 1 Thessalonians versus the colder, more critical stance in 2 Thessalonians—critics attribute these differences to a variation in authorship. In response to this argument, proponents of Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians assert that the variation in tone and evaluative stance stems from a shift in Paul's emotional attitude, due to the Thessalonians not meeting Paul's expectations. However, this study counters the argument by suggesting that both Thessalonian letters construe the Thessalonian

believers as highly commendable figures due to their significant growth in faith and mutual love, despite ongoing persecutions and afflictions. It foregrounds their positive reputation among the believers outside Thessalonica, their fulfillment of the senders' expectations in knowledge and conduct, and the senders' encouragement for the Thessalonians to undertake pastoral care and attention for the church, mirroring the senders' role during their absence. Therefore, claiming that 2 Thessalonians was authored pseudonymously, due to differences in tone or evaluative stance between the two Thessalonian letters, lacks foundation from the start.

Referring to the ostensibly similar words and structures between First and Second Thessalonians, critics attribute these features to the pseudonymous author of 2 Thessalonians imitating 1 Thessalonians. Proponents for Pauline authorship acknowledge the significant similarities in words and structures between the two letters but attribute them to the similar topics and consistent thematic concerns shared between the letters. However, this study approaches the argument of similarity by examining the shared register within both Thessalonian texts. Because both Thessalonian texts consistently utilize the same register, they inherently exhibit common indicators of the register's semantic and structural potential. As discussed previously, the register-specific overarching semantic potential inherent in each Thessalonian text revolves around the senders' continuous pastoral engagement with their Thessalonian recipients through the medium of written correspondence. The register-specific overarching structural potential encompasses the sender's progression from affirming and strengthening their relationship with the recipients, addressing pivotal issues, offering exhortations, and ultimately culminating the letter.

However, the similarities between the two letters are limited to the register-specific semiotic potentials that both texts commonly employ. Within the constraints of semantic and structural choices offered by the register, each Thessalonian text independently conveys its unique engagement with the contextual situation, employing distinct lexicogrammatical elements that are contextually appropriate. For instance, both texts share common topic-comment units that serve as exhortations in terms of function and structural order. However, the semantic features within these units are entirely distinct from each other. This pattern holds true for all the topic-comment units found in First and Second Thessalonians. In the thematization of specific lexicogrammatical elements, the two Thessalonian letters exhibit notable distinctions. For instance, in 1 Thessalonians, the Thessalonian recipients and letter senders are frequently thematized, while 2 Thessalonians predominantly thematizes abstract or conceptual entities and divine figures, particularly the Lord among them. In linguistic highlighting, they differ in the designation of marked lexicogrammatical elements, thereby illustrating their unique strategies for establishing prominence and distinguishing the discourse into three distinct planes as background, foreground, and frontground material. The more closely we scrutinize the lexicogrammatical elements and structures through the analytical lenses of thematization at all levels, linguistic prominence, and semantic nuances within topic-comment units, the more we appreciate both the overarching similarities and specific differences between First and Second Thessalonians. Although both letters reflect a consistent use of structure and language due to their instantiation of the same register, a detailed analysis reveals distinct features that are tailored to their respective immediate

settings, highlighting how each letter linguistically construes its unique situational context.

Regarding the purportedly emphatic authenticating comment in 2 Thess 3:17 and its absence in 1 Thessalonians, critics attribute this phenomenon to the pseudonymous author's excessive emphasis on Pauline authorship in an endeavor to establish the letter's authenticity as genuinely Pauline. Additionally, with reference to the assertion that such a sign appears in every Pauline letter, critics argue that this suggests a later date of composition for the letter when the Pauline corpus was complete. For proponents of Pauline authorship, this autograph serves as Paul's distinct hallmark, verifying the letter's authenticity and distinguishing it from spurious letters falsely attributed to him, as observed in cases such as 2 Thess 2:2. However, this study suggests that 2 Thess 3:17 does not linguistically represent a verification autograph. The analytical findings from the transitivity network, theme-rheme constructions, and the larger semantic flow of the topic-comment unit in which the remark is situated reveal that it merely presents the final greeting written by Paul's hand, following a pattern observed in his other letters. The actual greeting penned by Paul is presented in 3:18, and a similar greeting expression is also found in 1 Thessalonians' final salutation. Hence, positing that the comment in 2 Thess 3:17 functions as a definitive mark of authenticity, before advancing arguments regarding the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, does not constitute a logical foundation for the debate.

Through discourse analysis of First and Second Thessalonians, employing the linguistic concept of register, this study arrives at a measured conclusion that both texts are authentic Pauline letters. Contrary to the dominant argument advocating

pseudonymous authorship of 2 Thessalonians—predicated on purported situational

inconsistencies between the two letters—this research posits that the ideational,

interpersonal, and textual dimensions of meaning remain consistent across both

documents, affirming their shared context of situation. Furthermore, this analysis

suggests that traditional arguments, whether contesting or supporting Pauline authorship

of 2 Thessalonians, should not heavily influence the authorship debate. This is because

the semantic and structural features central to these arguments do not manifest in the

language of First and Second Thessalonians, underscoring a need to reconsider the

criteria for determining authorship within this scholarly discourse.

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